S. N. BEHRMAN

# METEOR

A THEATRE GUILD PLAY

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*Meteor*

## THEATRE GUILD PLAYS

*By George Bernard Shaw*
HEARTBREAK HOUSE
BACK TO METHUSELAH
THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE
SAINT JOAN
CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA
ARMS AND THE MAN
THE MAN OF DESTINY
ANDROCLES AND THE LION
PYGMALION
THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA
MAJOR BARBARA
*By Leonid Andreiev*
HE WHO GETS SLAPPED
*By Georg Kaiser*
FROM MORN TO MIDNIGHT
*By Leonhard Frank*
KARL AND ANNA
*By Frantisek Langer*
THE CAMEL THROUGH THE NEEDLE'S EYE
*By V. Kirchon & A. Ouspensky*
RED RUST
*By S. N. Behrman*
METEOR

*New York* · BRENTANO'S · *Publishers*

A THEATRE GUILD PLAY

# *Meteor*

BY

*S. N. Behrman*

Samuel Nathaniel
1893–

*"Only one resource is left to me, to become an absolute egoist."*

NAPOLEON

*(Letter written when a young man)*

PS
3503
E37M4

*New York* · BRENTANO'S · *Mcmxxx*

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*To*

LYNN *and* ALFRED

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*METEOR was first presented by the Theatre Guild on December 2, 1929, at the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, with the following cast:*

## CHARACTERS

| | |
|---|---|
| *Phyllis Pennell* | Shirley O'Hara |
| *Douglas Carr* | Douglass Montgomery |
| *Raphael Lord* | Alfred Lunt |
| *Dr. Avery* | Edward Emery |
| *Ann Carr* | Lynn Fontanne |
| *Sherman Maxwell* | Martin Berkeley |
| *Curtis Maxwell* | Lawrence Leslie |
| *Mullin* | Leonard Loan |
| *A Butler* | Charles McClelland |

*Staged by* Philip Moeller

## SCENES

Act One. *Living-room in Dr. Avery's house in a small university town in Massachusetts.*

Act Two. *Raphael Lord's house on Fifth Ave. in New York City. Five years later.*

Act Three. *The same. One year later.*

# *Act One*

## *ACT ONE*

SCENE: *The scene is the living-room in an old-fashioned house in a small University town in Massachusetts. It is the habitation of a scholar; the high old bookcases are filled with portentous looking volumes, the desk and tables are covered with piles of scientific magazines. The orderliness of the room is a momentary banking of disorder by disciplinary hands. There are two doors on the left.—The downstage one leads to* DR. AVERY'S *study, the upstage one to* ANN'S *room. On the right is a large double-door leading to other rooms in the house. Through the large bay-windows in the rear may be seen the denuded tops of trees—maples and elms. It is late fall. The time is evening.*

AT RISE: *When the curtain goes up it reveals* PHYLLIS PENNELL *back of desk L. tying up Douglas' birthday present to* ANN. *She is twenty, pretty, wears a simple evening frock.* DOUGLAS CARR *enters from R. He is a sensitive boy of twenty-two.*

DOUGLAS

Oh, hello, Phyl.

PHYLLIS

Hello, darling. I'm just doing up your present for Ann. [*She is tying a big-bow-ribbon.*] Help me with this will

you? Put your finger there. [*He does so.*] There! Isn't it pretty?

DOUGLAS

A little too much ribbon, I think.

PHYLLIS

I hope Ann likes what I got her. Do you think she will?

DOUGLAS

Of course she will. Ann isn't hard to please.

PHYLLIS

Well, that sounds doubtful.

DOUGLAS

I didn't mean that. . . .

PHYLLIS

I'm awfully excited. I always get excited over parties. How do you like my dress?

DOUGLAS

You look slick. You had it on last week didn't you?

PHYLLIS

Why, Doug, it's brand new.

DOUGLAS

Sorry!

PHYLLIS

What's the use of dressing up for you?

DOUGLAS

Lots of use. ~~Look at me. Abject~~!

PHYLLIS

[*Taking his hand.*] Love me?

DOUGLAS

[*Putting his arms around her.*] Of course.

PHYLLIS

More conviction, please.

DOUGLAS

[*Kissing her.*] Darling.

PHYLLIS

Oh, Raphael Lord called up a few minutes ago.

DOUGLAS

Thought he might have. He left a message for me at the library. What did he want?

PHYLLIS

I wouldn't speak to him. You know the way I feel about him. I do wish, Doug, you'd forget this idea of going to New York with him. With Raphael Lord of all people!

DOUGLAS

Well, you can't deny he's brilliant.

PHYLLIS

You've heard him admit it so often now you believe it.

DOUGLAS

Uncle Avery says Lord's the most promising student he has come across in years.

PHYLLIS

Well, he ought to be! He's got a head start. He must be at least five years older than any of the other boys.

DOUGLAS

Well, you needn't worry. I probably won't go to New York with him.

PHYLLIS

Probably!

DOUGLAS

Haven't the guts.

PHYLLIS

Why, Douglas!

DOUGLAS

Let's drop it. We ought to begin helping Mrs. Goodhue with the sandwiches. Come on along.

PHYLLIS

No, Doug. Wait a minute. I want to know what's the matter.

DOUGLAS

What do you mean?

PHYLLIS

I want to know what's the matter.

DOUGLAS

Nothing. Why?

PHYLLIS

You can't fool me. You haven't been yourself lately, and I've noticed it. You haven't been working. Some-

thing has been bothering you and you can't tell me there hasn't. . . .

DOUGLAS

Nothing special.

PHYLLIS

Yes—it is.

DOUGLAS

Well, everyone gets low once in a while. I'll get over it.

PHYLLIS

Why don't you come to me about it instead of spending all your spare time with that Lord person? Hearing him talk about himself all the time would get anybody depressed.

DOUGLAS

Lord's all right. I wish I were like him.

PHYLLIS

Why, Douglas. You're sweet and lovable and he's—

DOUGLAS

[*Passionately.*] I'm ineffectual. I'm no good at all.

PHYLLIS

[*Amazed at this outburst.*] Why, Doug!

DOUGLAS

Well, it's true. Look at Raphael— No advantages— God knows where he came from—Uncle Avery says that he doesn't even believe that Raphael Lord is his real name. And yet he's sure of himself, certain of his future— everything I'm not.

PHYLLIS

Well, think of your being so impressed by that conceited, objectionable—why, he's no more than a sort of tramp.

DOUGLAS

You're prejudiced.

PHYLLIS

You're hypnotized.

DOUGLAS

Nonsense. Don't be silly.

PHYLLIS

You are, Douglas.

DOUGLAS

It's just that being with Lord has made me conscious of my own limitations—that's all. I'm terribly discouraged.

PHYLLIS

But, Doug, darling, why?

DOUGLAS

Well, I can't kid myself. I'm not doing especially well in my work.

PHYLLIS

Has Uncle Avery said anything?

DOUGLAS

Oh, I'm plodding along doing the routine job of a Ph.D. grind—but I'm not my father's son.

PHYLLIS

You talk as if you were an old man—with your work behind you.

DOUGLAS

When father was my age he had written several important papers. He was James' star pupil at Harvard. Oh, well, just another dull son of a brilliant father. [*He kisses her.*] Come on, Phyl. [*He rises and crosses toward door R.*] Let's go downstairs and help Mrs. Goodhue with the sandwiches.

PHYLLIS

No, wait a minute. This is just a mood. I know it will pass.

DOUGLAS

For two pins I'd chuck the whole thing and go to New York with him—take my chances. . . .

PHYLLIS

What does he want you for? To pay his expenses, I suppose, while his great schemes get under way.

DOUGLAS

Well, as I probably won't go, there's no use getting agitated about it. I've been sitting over there working—forcing myself to write. My notes piled up before me—then suddenly I stopped and looked at what I was doing. I looked at the page. Just a page of stuff—dull, routine, commonplace. I saw myself writing hundreds of such pages all my life, and what for? Files. It all seemed so useless. We'll marry and I'll get a job teaching in some

fresh-water college out West and you'll be the young instructor's wife pinching to make both ends meet. In the meantime let's go inside and help Mrs. Goodhue with the sandwiches—guests will be here soon.

PHYLLIS

This is all Raphael Lord's doing. He's filled your head. . . .

[RAPHAEL LORD *comes in. His age is indeterminate; he might be 24 or 26 or even older. Febrile, restless, the brain which animates him is an incessant gyroscope. A terrific nervous vitality. Pale, underfed, weak, except nervously and mentally. Shabbily dressed. His movements are abrupt, panther-like. He gives an effect of darting about a room, and in his speech, too, of sloughing through irrelevancies like an arrow.*]

LORD

Where's Ann?

DOUGLAS

I don't know.

LORD

[*To* DOUGLAS.] Got to talk to you alone. [*To* PHYLLIS.] Mrs. Goodhue wants you, better go help her.

PHYLLIS

Well, of all the nerve!

LORD

I'm in a hurry!

DOUGLAS

[*Afraid of what he'll say to* PHYLLIS.] Perhaps you'd better . . .

PHYLLIS

[*Disgusted.*] Are you afraid of him!

LORD

[*Sits L. end of fender.*] I've got some important things to say to Doug and I haven't much time. Do I have to go through a ritual to get you out of here?

PHYLLIS

Well, of all the nerve!

DOUGLAS

I'll tell her afterwards anyway— Why can't you talk before both of us?

LORD

She'll interrupt with foolish remarks. I can't be bothered.

PHYLLIS

[*Rises, picking up* ANN'S *present.*] Oh, you can't! Well, I'm not in the least bit interested in your get-rich-quick schemes. If he wants to borrow the fare to go to New York—give it to him, Doug. It will be worth it to get rid of him. [*She goes out R.*]

DOUGLAS

[*Distressed.*] Why can't you be nice to people?

LORD

I've got no inclination for it.

DOUGLAS

Pose!

LORD

I don't have to be polite to people. It's more important for them to conciliate me.

DOUGLAS

I'm not sure what's the matter with you, Rafe—genius or swelled head.

LORD

You'll find out. What I came to tell you is this. I'm leaving Calvert tonight.

DOUGLAS

[*Sitting beside* LORD *at his L.*] But I thought you said . . .

LORD

I've changed my mind. I've gotten all I can out of this place. My God, I thought I came here to learn something! I thought this was a University— It's a stadium! Lot of football fans and flag wavers. And that moron Sherman Maxwell the presiding genius!

DOUGLAS

Oh, Sherman's just a fad. He's a great player and . . .

LORD

So I read in the papers. Well, are you going to stick around Calvert rooting in the grand-stand while Sherman Maxwell runs around with a football against his chest, or are you coming to New York with me?

DOUGLAS

Well, it's quite a step for me to take, Raphael. You see I'm just about half-way through my Post-Graduate work . . .

LORD

It's a great time to quit. If you ever get your Ph.D. you'll be sunk!

DOUGLAS

If there was something definite I'd quit in a minute. But this way . . .

LORD

Let me do the worrying for both of us.

DOUGLAS

How can you be so confident about your future? When you haven't even a definite idea. . . .

LORD

This is your great chance, Doug. You've no special talent for scholarship, you know that.

DOUGLAS

I guess that's true—I wonder what I have got a special talent for?

LORD

[*Rises and crosses over to desk.*] You'll be all right with me. Stay here and you'll become a college professor.

DOUGLAS

Well, that was good enough for my father.

LORD

Your father was a great man.

DOUGLAS

My father . . .

LORD

Don't talk to me about your father. I know more about him than you do.

DOUGLAS

Of course—you know everything.

LORD

It was on account of your father that I came here. I was in jail in Denver for bumming. In the prison library there was a copy of your father's autobiography. I read it—one sitting. The book got me; I said to myself: "The guy that wrote that book was the real thing and if he thinks so much of Calvert it must be some place." The minute I got out I hopped a freight and came here. What do I find? A lot of babies yelling themselves blue in the face over a football prodigy.

DOUGLAS

You seem to have Sherman Maxwell on the brain.

LORD

It amazes me Ann sees so much of him.

DOUGLAS

Oh, so that's it. [*He laughs.*] Rafe . . .

LORD

You don't think I'm jealous of him, do you?

DOUGLAS

Well, it occurred to me. . . .

LORD

Let me tell you this. If I thought for one minute she took him seriously I'd have nothing more to do with her.

DOUGLAS

You're priceless, Raphael.

LORD

Ann's sorry for him, that's all. One thing Ann's got to learn is to be ruthless with bores.

DOUGLAS

But look here, Rafe! You've never given me the slightest idea what it's all about. You talk of taking me in with you. In—what?

LORD

I haven't settled that yet.

DOUGLAS

You must have some idea. You wouldn't want me to give up my work here and come to New York. . . .

LORD

You've got to trust me absolutely. You've got to believe in me entirely.

DOUGLAS

If there's something concrete, I'm willing to listen. But just this way . . .

LORD

My God! Isn't that concrete enough for you?

DOUGLAS

I don't know.

LORD

Whatever I go into, I'll go to the top. It's inevitable.

DOUGLAS

It's too vague, Raphael.

LORD

Do you think I can fail?

DOUGLAS

But you haven't got anything to start with—no capital —no friends.

LORD

I've got more than that. I've got myself. I've got my brain. I've got my vision.

DOUGLAS

Gee, I wish I could be as sure of myself as you are.

LORD

If you were sure of yourself your confidence would be misplaced.

DOUGLAS

Rafe . . .

LORD

Too late.

DOUGLAS

But, Rafe, you'll have to have some money.

LORD

I'm not asking you to come to New York because I need you.

DOUGLAS

I have my inheritance. . . .

LORD

I don't need anyone. I'm only asking you because you're Ann's brother. I'm crazy about her, that's why I'm asking you.

DOUGLAS

You're in love with Ann—and yet you're leaving her here.

LORD

No I'm not. She's coming with me.

DOUGLAS

Raphael, you're joking.

[DR. AVERY *enters. He is sixty—gray hair—and wrinkled eyes. He carries a brief-case.*]

LORD

Where's Ann?

DR. AVERY

I thought she'd be here. She left the library before I did. Won't you wait?

LORD

I was going to.

DOUGLAS

Hello, Uncle Avery.

DR. AVERY

[*To* DOUGLAS.] Phyllis wants you to help her. From the preparations I gather you are expecting the entire college for Ann's birthday.

DOUGLAS

It won't be as bad as it looks. About a dozen people. See you later, Rafe.

[DOUGLAS *crosses to door R.*]

LORD

[*Sitting at desk looking over a book.*] You probably won't.

DOUGLAS

You're not really leaving tonight!

LORD

You'll find I don't say things just for the sake of talking.

DOUGLAS

I'll go to the station with you.

LORD

You needn't bother. [DOUGLAS *is very hurt. He adores* LORD. *He starts to speak, can't evolve anything, goes out.* LORD *gives the effect of having already put* DOUGLAS

*out of consciousness. He turns on* AVERY.] Where's Ann?

AVERY

Probably dressing for the party.—Look here, son. I want to talk to you. What's this about your leaving tonight?

[AVERY *sits R. end of long stool in front of fireplace.*]

LORD

It's true, that's all.

AVERY

Phyllis tells me you want to take Douglas with you.

LORD

I gave him a chance.

AVERY

He refused the opportunity?

LORD

Yes. He prefers to stick around here and become a college professor.

AVERY

A lowly destiny, I admit. But what do you offer?

LORD

The truth is Doctor, there's something I've been wanting to tell you for a long time.

AVERY

Yes.

LORD

[*Sitting L. end of stool in front of fireplace.*] I've discovered in myself—an amazing faculty.

AVERY

Only one?

LORD

[*A little hurt.*] You think I'm conceited, don't you?

AVERY

Well—you're not exactly tortured by doubt.

LORD

Doctor—I'm going to tell you something that I've never told to a living soul. . . .

AVERY

Well?

LORD

I know things before they happen.

AVERY

You what?

LORD

I've proved it to myself. I know things—before they happen.

AVERY

A prophet! Well! Well! Very interesting. [LORD *is a little let down.* AVERY *isn't sufficiently startled.*] It's an Old Testament faculty. You're a curious person to revive it, Raphael.

LORD

You don't believe me now but in two years you will—in less.

AVERY

You know this doesn't surprise me, my boy.—Doesn't surprise me at all.

LORD

It doesn't surprise you because you don't believe it.

AVERY

It doesn't surprise me because I've been expecting something of the sort.

LORD

How do you mean?

AVERY

You know I've been very interested in you, ever since you came here. I don't mind admitting that I've rather studied you. I felt pretty certain that you'd produce some little gadget out of your mind to demonstrate your superiority to yourself and to the rest of the world. So it's prophecy! Well! Well! I have in mind a book: "Varieties of Egomania." You shall have a footnote in it.

LORD

Only a footnote?

AVERY

Maybe a chapter!

LORD

You think I'm a case, don't you?

AVERY

In a sense everyone's a case.

LORD

In a short time, in two years—maybe in less, I'll be one of the most talked-of men in America. Will you believe me then?

AVERY

No, I won't. But I do believe this—that if you stay here and let me whittle you down I may be able to make a first-rate scholar out of you.

LORD

[*Rises and crosses to center.*] I'm going to New York. I'm going tonight.

AVERY

What will you do there?

LORD

Never mind.

AVERY

Another vision? [LORD *does not answer.*] You know, Raphael, if you lived sensibly and ate more regularly, you wouldn't have any visions. Visions invariably proceed from malnutrition. The old saints knew that. When they wanted to see interesting things they went into long fasts.

LORD

Some day I'm coming back. . . .

AVERY

I'm rather disappointed. I used to believe I could make

a fine scholar out of you—but I'm afraid you haven't the temperament.

LORD

I could become a fine scholar without the temperament.

AVERY

It's a pity you won't take the time for it.

LORD

It is in a way. God! I wish I had more lives. You see, Doctor, the trouble with most of these machine-made scholars is that they're dull . . . dull! The fellows around here despise me. They can't make me out. They think because I'm brilliant I can't be profound. [*Sits in chair R. of desk.*]

AVERY

[*Laughing and crossing to him.*] Raphael, I adore you.

LORD

Do you want me to tell you what's the matter with scholarship in America?

AVERY

I'd love to know.

LORD

It's that none of the scholars are men of the world.

AVERY

Why don't you remedy that defect? You're a man of the world, aren't you?

LORD

It depends on what you mean by a man of the world. If you mean one of those stuffed shirts that go out to dinner every night in a crush hat,—well, I'm not. But in a deeper sense I am. Did you know that I was with Sandino in Nicaragua? Jack Reed and I were pretty close to Lenin in Russia.

AVERY

How do you get on with Mussolini?

LORD

You don't believe me?

AVERY

I don't have to believe you to like you.

LORD

[*Suddenly suspicious, passionate.*] You distrust me too. In some obscure way, you are jealous of me.

AVERY

My dear boy!

LORD

Yes, you are! You envy my sure grip on life, my certainty. I'm sure, and you are floundering. You envy me my genius.

AVERY

Envy you your genius! My dear boy! I've been doing all I can to foster it. If you knew how bored I am with the ordinary run of my students. No, my dear Raphael, I'm not jealous of you. I'm fond of you. But I do wish

you'd eat a bit more regularly and take better care of your health.

LORD

[*Suddenly.*] Dr. Avery,—I respect you enormously. You wait. One of these days I'll do something marvelous for you. Endow a University for you—anything you like.

AVERY

Well, that's very generous of you.

[ANN *comes in from door U.L. She crosses to* LORD *and takes his hand.*]

ANN

Oh, hello, Raphael. Isn't this nice? [*Crossing to between* LORD *and* DR. AVERY.] He's the first to greet me on my birthday.

LORD

I didn't know it was your birthday.

ANN

Can't you be pleasant? What shall we do with him, Uncle Avery?

AVERY

He was very pleasant to me just before you came in. He presented me with a magnificent gift.

ANN

Really? What?

AVERY

Oh, a little thing. A University endowed especially for me.

ANN

Oh, dear! When is this going to happen?

AVERY

As soon as he is a multi-millionaire. How long, Raphael? A few months?

LORD

I want to talk to Ann alone.

AVERY

Isn't he direct?

ANN

Since he has been giving you a University, don't you think we had better tell him what we have for him?

AVERY

I'm afraid it's too late. Raphael's going to New York tonight.

ANN

[*She looks from one to the other.*] No. No. Oh, Raphael.—He can't be serious.

LORD

I know what I have to do and I'm going to do it.

ANN

Let's tell him. Let's tell him now.

AVERY

In our blundering way, Ann and I have contrived to get you the Wendell Philipps Scholarship for next year.

LORD

What's that?

ANN

Three years at any University in Europe.

AVERY

Oxford, Berlin, the Sorbonne—wherever you want to go.

ANN

Three thousand dollars a year.—You won't have to worry about anything—just study. History, economics. You will be able to make anything you want out of yourself.

LORD

I'll do that without a scholarship.

[ANN *is silent. She stares at him.*]

AVERY

The truth is, Ann, Raphael is bored with us.

ANN

What's he going to New York for?

LORD

Money!

AVERY

Can it be that we've been harboring a materialist in our bosom, Ann?

LORD

Do you despise money? Why, this is the most commercial time in the history of the world. Money-technique is the essence of the age and I shall be a master of it! Despise money! Why, that's intellectual snobbery.

ANN

Whatever is he talking about, Uncle Avery?

AVERY

I leave it to you to find out. [AVERY *goes to door D.L.*] Mind—you don't go to New York with him, Ann.

ANN

[*Laughing.*] Don't worry.

AVERY

Well, he's a very compelling young man! Keep him here.

[AVERY *goes out.*]

ANN

[*Sits in chair R. of desk.*] I'll do my best. Well . . .

LORD

I love you.

ANN

[*Slowly.*] You're very difficult, Raphael.

LORD

You must come with me tonight.

ANN

You're not serious. You can't be serious.

LORD

[*Draws chair below desk to her left and sits.*] Listen, Ann, my darling. Can I tell you what I feel inside my head, inside my will? Something—irrestistible. Something that nothing can stop. I'll do anything for you. Isn't there something in you—some instinct—that tells you that I can do it? That nothing will stop me doing it? ~~My love—I love you.~~

ANN

My mind tells me this is romantic nonsense—but something else, something deeper, makes me believe in you. It's curious.

LORD

~~Why is it curious?~~

ANN

Why do I believe so much in you? ~~Why am I so much taken with you~~?

LORD

It's practically inevitable.

ANN

I hardly know you—anything about you.

LORD

You've known me six months.

ANN

No, really?

LORD

I've been here six months.

ANN

But I don't know you any better than I did when you first came.

LORD

I've told you everything about myself.

ANN

It's all so unreal. It's like—Jack London.

LORD

I knew London. I once took a trip with him on his boat. [ANN *laughs.*] What are you laughing at?

ANN

Nothing!

LORD

Yes you are. You're laughing.

ANN

Well, it's only that whenever anyone mentions anyone, provided they are famous enough, you seem to have known them.

LORD

I hate mediocrities.

ANN

You keep insisting on your superiority, as if it were necessary to convince yourself.

LORD

It isn't. Why should I pretend that I'm not extraordinary? Why shouldn't I be aware of my gifts?

ANN

When you talk like this, I think you're being funny, but when I look at you, I see that you are perfectly serious.

LORD

I can't be flippant about myself.

ANN

My father was a great man and yet he was very simple and unassuming and humorous.

LORD

Why should I be simple because he was? Why should I be unassuming because he was? No. You've got to take me as I am.

ANN

You're not serious about going to New York tonight?

LORD

Absolutely.

ANN

You haven't any money, have you?

LORD

We'll manage.

ANN

You're quite mad, Raphael.

LORD

I love you.

ANN

Do you? Do you really love me? I mean,—really?

LORD

Not exactly with the emotion of Sherman Maxwell.

ANN

What is this obsession with Sherman?

LORD

[*Under his breath.*] Ineffectual!

ANN

I'm fond of him.

LORD

Yeah?

ANN

He's a dear.

LORD

Is he? Well, I hate him! I hate him. But I love you.

ANN

I'm a little afraid of you.

LORD

[*Laughs.*] That's as it should be.

ANN

You funny boy. You'd have great charm if you took the time. . . .

LORD

Can't stop for that. [*He rises and crosses D.R.*]

ANN

You do attract me.

LORD

I know. [*Crosses and kisses her. Then crosses back to chair below desk and sits down.*]

ANN

We must be sensible. What have we in common?

LORD

Our love.

ANN

No. You're too restless. You're too ambitious. You're not the sort of person I care for.

LORD

Well, you're in for it!

ANN

You don't really imagine I'm going to New York with you tonight?

LORD

Of course you're going with me.

ANN

Why do you like me?

LORD

Why? You're cool. You're remote. I have an idea you're lovely.

ANN

Is it only a suspicion?

LORD

I like to talk to you.

ANN

That's it! I'm an audience.

LORD

You're intelligent. You understand the implication of what I say.

ANN

I'm very clever, Raphael.

LORD

Also you've got a feeling for poetry but you're not wistful.

[ANN *laughs and quotes.*]

ANN

"And the best and the worst of this is
Neither is most to blame
If you have forgotten my kisses
And I have forgotten your name."

[LORD *speaks the third line with her but stops.*]

LORD

You'll never forget my name.

ANN

You say you love me. Do something for your love.

LORD

What?

ANN

Stay here. Take this scholarship. It's a splendid chance. Find out what there is in you.

LORD

I know.

ANN

No, no. You're very callow yet—really, Raphael.

LORD

I couldn't stay even if I wanted to.

ANN

Why not?

LORD

I have a command to go.

ANN

Command! From whom?

LORD

My star!

ANN

Your star? What are you talking about?

LORD

I've gotten all I can out of this place.

ANN

Don't talk like that, Raphael. I love this place. I love Calvert.

LORD

What more can we accomplish here? You come with me.

ANN

But Raphael, I can't leave Calvert like this.

LORD

Why not?

ANN

You must give me time.

LORD

I can't do that. You must decide now.

ANN

You're ruthless, aren't you?

LORD

What's wrong with that? Do you think it possible to achieve anything without ruthlessness?

ANN

I imagine there are people who wouldn't be ruthless no matter what material success it brought them.

LORD

Wouldn't they? That's naive. Do you think people are content with mediocrity and poverty? Why don't they rise out of it? Do you think people stop in taking what

they want out of a moral scruple? That's simply—naive. To be ruthless requires strength—it requires courage and concentration. You remind me of the people who say they have marvelous ideas if they could only express them, which is exactly like saying they'd be rich if only they had money.

ANN

[*After a moment.*] There's a flaw in that somewhere. I'll probably discover just where it is after I've thought about it a little while. [*With a sigh.*] Oh, dear, my best answers come to me too late.

LORD

There's no flaw in it. Besides, you'll profit by my ruthlessness.

ANN

Will I? How?

LORD

Don't you want to keep some element of surprise?

ANN

You mean money, I suppose.

LORD

Power.

ANN

And what makes you think that is what I want?

LORD

What you want—I'll give you.

ANN

I'm not sure you can.

LORD

In any case you have no choice. You love me. Ann . . .

ANN

Do you know what first endeared you to me?

LORD

Yes. [*Corrects himself.*] No.

ANN

Because I heard that you had crossed the continent because you'd read father's book.

LORD

His personality comes through every word he's written. If he were alive I know I'd worship him.

ANN

No, I don't think so. You have some dream of success in your head he wouldn't have liked.

LORD

How do you know what I've got in my head? What's your father got to do with me?

ANN

I adored my father. I still do. This old house—his spirit pervades it.

LORD

But what's it to do with us—with our lives?

ANN

Oh, so much! I wonder if I can make you see. Before he came here he had a professorship at Harvard. He was the first man in his field in this country—a pioneer. Of course psychology wasn't as popular then as it is now.

LORD

It's too popular now. What a lot of voluble stuffed shirts these psychology courses turn out!

ANN

Try to listen—just once.

LORD

I will. I'll try. But you mustn't expect too much.

ANN

Raphael, you're hopeless.

LORD

[*Taking her hand.*] Go on. I'll listen. I'll listen if it kills me—sweet. . . .

ANN

Money doesn't interest me very much. As for power—well, if I had it—on whom would I use it?

LORD

I don't want money for its own sake. I don't want power for its own sake. I want to use them. I have intellectual ambitions and curiosities beyond your . . . Oh, I wish your father was alive. He would have understood me.

ANN

Tell me. I'll try to understand you. I'll do my best. . . .

LORD

For one thing, you know that I want to write. Comparative Sociology. Can't you see the dedication? "To my dear wife without whose help this book could not have been completed"? Ann, we'll roam the world together,—peonage in Mexico, caste in India, ancestor-worship in China. We'll give the Soviets the once-over in Russia. . . .

ANN

That's very exciting, Raphael.

LORD

You'll have an exciting life with me.

ANN

You know I believe in your book, but must we start it tonight?

LORD

Yes. Yes.

ANN

Why can't we do the preliminary work here?

LORD

No. No.

ANN

What can be waiting for you in New York that is more important to you than I am?

LORD

Many things. My destiny.

ANN

But if you love me . . . You talk like the hero in an old-fashioned novel!

LORD

It's true.

ANN

So does Sherman. He offers me some sort of fabulous fortune too—professional football. I must say his sounds more real than yours.

LORD

So that's it!

ANN

What do you mean?

LORD

You want him.

ANN

I just wanted to show you . . .

LORD

I ~~offer you~~ . . . He hasn't got a brain in his head. A year after he's left college they'll be using his name to sell fake stocks. I offer you and you prefer . . . ~~You're not taking any chances, are you~~? [*He rises.*] Well. I know my future and I know his too. [*Crosses and sits again on chair front of desk.*] Will you come with me tonight?

ANN

No.

LORD

Can I have your word that you'll join me in a week?

ANN

No.

LORD

In a month?

ANN

No.

LORD

You don't love me, then?

ANN

[*Slowly.*] I don't think I do.

LORD

[*Rising and taking his hat.*] All right then, you'll never see me again. [*He starts to go. She stops him.*]

ANN

[*Rising.*] Raphael, don't go. Don't go like this.

LORD

Why didn't you tell me you loved Maxwell?

ANN

You misunderstood me.

LORD

You've kept me here all these precious months,

ANN

I wanted you to stay because it was good for your future. . . .

LORD

You wanted to reduce me to you and the dullness around you. [*Crosses front of her to center.*] God, how I despise you! God, let her know how I despise all of you! I hate you. Do you hear? Do you hear?

ANN

Yes. I hear.

LORD

I'll always hate you. [*He rushes out R.*]

[ANN, *dizzied by the blow, starts to go to her room when* DOUGLAS *enters from R.*]

DOUGLAS

What's the matter? [*There is no answer.*] What's the matter with Raphael?

ANN

Why?

DOUGLAS

He rushed by as pale as a ghost. Wouldn't speak to me. What's happened?

ANN

I don't know. . . . [*She starts to go to her room.*]

DOUGLAS

Oh, Ann . . . [*She stops.*] Sherman phoned. His

brother is in town for the day. He asked if he could bring him over for the party. I told him yes.

ANN

Of course. [DOUGLAS *starts to go.*] Douglas. [*She crosses to him.*]

DOUGLAS

Yes.

ANN

Go after Raphael.

[AVERY *enters from D.L.*]

DOUGLAS

I don't know if I could get him now.

ANN

Yes you can. In his room. Or at the station surely.

DOUGLAS

What'll I tell him?

ANN

Tell him he misunderstood me. Make him come back.

DOUGLAS

I'll do what I can.

ANN

Make him telephone. Hurry.

DOUGLAS

All right, Ann. [DOUGLAS *goes off R.*]

DR. AVERY

[*Crossing to chair below desk*—ANN *is at C.*] I hope you get him back. He's a tremendous relief from the average undergraduate.

ANN

Frightful temper. [*There is a pause.*] What will become of him?

DR. AVERY

He'll manage. As to what will become of him—well, that's problematical. Pity he wasn't born a century ago. He might have become a military adventurer on the Napoleonic scale. [ANN *impulsively goes to him*] Yes, my dear?

ANN

I feel that there is something in him magnificently worth saving.

DR. AVERY

So do I! But as the boys say, try and do it.

ANN

I intend to make a fight for him. [SHERMAN'S *and* CURTIS' *voices are heard off R.*] Oh, they're beginning to come. [*She starts for her room and then hesitates for a moment.*] Uncle Avery, if Raphael should come back and if I went with him tonight, I suppose you'd think I'm quite crazy. . . . [*There is a slight pause.*] Well, perhaps I am. [*She goes off to her room U.L.* DR. AVERY, *left alone, looks after her, an indulgent smile playing about his lips. He saunters to the desk for a*

*magazine when* SHERMAN MAXWELL *and his brother* CURTIS *come in.* SHERMAN MAXWELL *is six feet tall, blond, with no suggestion of heaviness, an all-American end of great renown. His brother is much smaller and does not resemble* SHERMAN *in the least.* SHERMAN *is a "hick" country boy raised suddenly to fame.* CURTIS *is sleek, saturnine, with a city-edge.* SHERMAN *wears a dinner suit.* CURTIS, *a dark business suit.* SHERMAN *is not altogether comfortable in his stiff collar.*]

SHERMAN

Oh, hello, Dr. Avery. This is my brother Curtis.

DR. AVERY

[*Shaking hands with him.*] Hello. How are you? Another football player?

CURTIS

How do you do, Dr. Avery?

SHERMAN

Curtis doesn't want to stay for the whole party.

DR. AVERY

Well, to tell you the truth, I don't think I'm going to stay very long myself. [*He goes to his room, D.L.*]

CURTIS

[*Crosses to center. He's sizing up the place.*] Is that the Uncle Avery I keep hearing about?

SHERMAN

He's not really their Uncle, kind of looks after 'em.

He was a great pal of their father. The old man Carr must of been an awful educated man. Wrote a bunch o' books. Wish to hell I could get this tie straight. I can't get the ends to match.

CURTIS

[*As he fixes* SHERMAN's *tie.*] These Carrs got any money of their own?

SHERMAN

Not much to speak of. The old boy left 'em a little, I guess. Insurance and this house. But Ann works.—Thanks.

CURTIS

What at?

SHERMAN

In the library. That girl's smart as they make 'em. Isn't a book in the place she don't know—

[SHERMAN *is nervous. He is a little afraid of his brother.*]

CURTIS

[*Crossing D.L.*] Propose to her yet?

SHERMAN

Not yet. I kinda guess she's expectin' me to pop any minute. Pretends not to be interested much. Ann's funny that way. [*Sits on stool in front of fireplace.*]

CURTIS

[*After a moment—quietly.*] You're making a mistake, Sherman.

SHERMAN

Aw, now. Curt, wait till you see the girl, can't you? That's all I'm askin', wait till you meet the girl. You'll change your mind. See if you don't. Ain't fair to condemn a person before you meet 'em.

CURTIS

You're a fool, Sherman.

SHERMAN

[*Sulky.*] Oh the trouble with you, Curt, you got no romance in you. You don't understand romance. Thinkin' about money all the time.

CURTIS

I come down here to put a fortune in your hands and you won't listen.

SHERMAN

Who said I won't listen?

CURTIS

Got this "hick" girl on your mind.

SHERMAN

All I say is if I'm gonna give up my amateur standin' I've got to have a little talk with Ann about it, that's all.

CURTIS

[*Crossing U.C. Darkly.*] Suppose she doesn't approve.

SHERMAN

Aw sure, she will. I've already mentioned it to her.

CURTIS

What did she say?

SHERMAN

She didn't seem to care.

CURTIS

Suppose she does?

SHERMAN

I'll let you talk to her.

CURTIS

[*Sits in chair R. of desk.*] I'll have to beg her permission, I suppose, to let you earn a half a million dollars.

SHERMAN

Well, say, now listen; for all I know she'll think it's a great idea. Say, Curt, give the girl a chance, will you. [*Rises, and crosses D.R.*]

CURTIS

I'm not going to let this thing get away from us. I'm telling you now. Do you know what we can take in at the gate? One match at the Polo Grounds alone, one match.

SHERMAN

I'll bite. How much?

CURTIS

Forty percent of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Sixty thousand dollars.

SHERMAN

That's if you get that big a gate.

CURTIS

Bound to. You're the biggest man in American football right now. All you need to play—well, let's say, ten matches. I've got them all lined up—New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh,—maybe a couple in the West. A cold half million, I figure it's good for and that's conservative.

SHERMAN

[*Almost shyly.*] There's just one thing you're overlooking, Curt.

CURTIS

I'm overlooking nothing.

SHERMAN

[*Sits in chair L. of fireplace.*] How many matches do you figure?

CURTIS

I told you. Six or eight, maybe ten. I've had bunches of offers from small towns, but we'll just hit the big ones.

SHERMAN

Tell you the truth, Curt, I don't know if I *could* play 'em.

CURTIS

What? [*Pause.*] What do you mean?

SHERMAN

The old pump.

CURTIS

[*After a moment.*] Been bothering you lately?

SHERMAN

Some.

CURTIS

Been to a doctor?

SHERMAN

Yeah. I went to see a specialist in Boston.

CURTIS

What did he say?

SHERMAN

Football heart. Advises me to lay off. Geez, lucky my season is over.

CURTIS

[*Rises and crosses to* SHERMAN. *Cajoling.*] Well, now you know, Sherman, these matches . . . You can fake through 'em, can't you?

SHERMAN

Trouble is, once I get started in a game, I forget myself.

CURTIS

Well, don't forget yourself. Ten matches and you're through.

SHERMAN

Yeah. I might be.

CURTIS

Don't let that doctor scare you. If you ask me, it's nothing but nerves. I've never noticed anything wrong with you. I'm sure you're going to be all right. Anyway in these games most of the time you'll be playing against professionals.

SHERMAN

[*Crossing in front of fireplace.*] Don't you kid yourself. These professional teams are mean babies. I'd rather be up against these college boys any day.

CURTIS

[*Follows him.*] Now Sherman, will you stop worrying about yourself? You'll really make yourself sick. If you don't feel up to it, we'll wait till next season. You can have six months rest. You haven't mentioned this to anyone, have you?

SHERMAN

No, who would I tell?

CURTIS

Sure?

SHERMAN

Sure I'm sure.

CURTIS

Then it's all right.

SHERMAN

No, I haven't told anybody.

CURTIS

Nobody knows you've even been to see a doctor?

SHERMAN

Not a soul. Well, except—

CURTIS

Who?

SHERMAN

Oh, well, he doesn't matter a damn.

CURTIS

Who?

SHERMAN

A phoney college student I happened to meet on a train to Boston.

CURTIS

Who is he?

SHERMAN

Oh, he's just a big heel of a Bolshevick that hangs around here. No one knows where he came from. Don't even know his right name. No one has any use for him.

CURTIS

Is he a football player?

SHERMAN

A football player! Of course not. Didn't I tell you no one has any use for him?

CURTIS

What did you have to tell him you were going to see a doctor for?

SHERMAN

I didn't know I was telling him.

CURTIS

What?

SHERMAN

He just kept looking at me and it kinda slipped out. Besides, what difference does it make? No one around here even talks to him.

CURTIS

God, what a dumb-bell you are, Sherman! Always were!

SHERMAN

[*Crosses back of desk.*] Oh, don't be always crabbin', for God's sake.

CURTIS

Can't you see what we'd be up against if any dope on this got out? Might queer all these matches. I've been months arranging them. Don't forget I worked like hell on you all my life.

SHERMAN

I know all about it.

CURTIS

I worked to keep you in college before you . . . my God, Sherman!

SHERMAN

What's all this about? For all he knows, it might have been to cure a belly-ache. . . . This guy don't know what I went to see a doctor about.

CURTIS

Shut up!

SHERMAN

[*Crosses to L.*] I never said a damn thing . . . [ANN *comes in.*] Oh hello Ann! This is my brother, Curtis.

ANN

[*Going to* CURTIS.] How do you do?

SHERMAN

Curt's just in town for the day.

ANN

Sherman's told me a lot about his older brother. You don't resemble each other at all. I'd never have suspected you were brothers.

CURTIS

Sherman has all the looks . . .

SHERMAN

Well, Curt's got all the brains. He's awful smart, Ann.

ANN

Is he? Sit down.

SHERMAN

Curt, don't you think you'd better . . .

CURTIS

Oh, I saw a punch-bowl downstairs. Do you mind if I . . . ? [*Crossing toward door R.*]

ANN

Certainly. Let's all go. . . . [*She follows him.*]

SHERMAN

Aw, now, Ann. You don't want to go.

CURTIS

Is there anything in it?

ANN

Yes, there's something in it—fruit-juice!

CURTIS

I guess I'll have to use my imagination.

SHERMAN

[*Crossing to them.*] What did I tell you, Ann? Curt's always there with a come-back. Say, Ann, I want to talk to you about something personal. I'll see you in a second, Curt.

CURTIS

Can it be that he wants to get rid of me? See you later. [CURTIS *goes out R.*]

SHERMAN

[*Taking* ANN'S *hand and drawing her to C.*] Say, Ann, you look simply marvelous in that dress.

ANN

Sherman, you act just like a little boy—you are a little boy. What shall I do with you?

SHERMAN

That's easy. Marry me!

ANN

[*Sitting in chair R. of desk.*] Oh, my dear!

SHERMAN

[*Sitting in chair L. of desk.*] Oh, now, Ann, don't ask me to propose to you. What's the use? I'm crazy about you. I guess you know that other girls kinda make a fuss about me—but you—you're different. Probably that's why I want you.

ANN

Well, that's very generous of you.

SHERMAN

You know what I mean.

ANN

It's not very difficult to know what you mean, Sherman.

SHERMAN

But honestly, Ann, if you marry me I'll do anything in the world you want me to do.

ANN

But, Sherman, I don't want you to do anything.

SHERMAN

Now listen. Curt's got a big proposition for me. Remember what I told you?—Those professional matches. I stand to make about half a million dollars. Of course, you understand, it means giving up my amateur standing.

ANN

I don't see anything sacred about your amateur standing.

SHERMAN

Gee! You're some sport. I told Curt . . .

ANN

You told him . . . what?

SHERMAN

I told him I'd have to ask you.

ANN

But why me?

SHERMAN

Now wait a minute, let me talk.—I'm looking ahead for the both of us, see. After I play these dates, I quit football. Absolute! Maybe I'll take a movie engagement or so and then we'll travel. Go around the world. There's as much education in that as there is in books. How's that look to you? We'll just be sitting pretty—both of us. What do you say, Ann?

[LORD *enters from R.*]

LORD

Maxwell . . .

ANN

[*Overjoyed he is back.*] Raphael!

LORD

Maxwell, I want to talk to you.

SHERMAN

What about?

ANN

Did Douglas tell you? I sent him after you.

LORD

I haven't seen Douglas. I came back to see Maxwell.

SHERMAN

I'm Mr. Maxwell to you, Lord.

LORD

Don't be funny.

ANN

I'm so glad you're back, Raphael.

LORD

I haven't time to talk to you. I'm leaving in a few minutes.

SHERMAN

That's tough. We'll miss you.

ANN

I suppose it would never occur to you to take a morning train and get a good night's sleep and breakfast first. That would be too prosaic, I suppose. [*She goes out L. to her own room.*]

SHERMAN

Say what's eating you anyway?

LORD

You better listen to me.

SHERMAN

It's a lucky thing for you I don't smack you on the nose.

LORD

What good will that do you?

SHERMAN

It might teach you to behave like a gentleman.

LORD

I'm not a gentleman.

SHERMAN

I'll tell the world.

[CURTIS *enters from R.*]

CURTIS

I'm Sherman's brother. Curtis Maxwell.

LORD

[*To* SHERMAN.] Want your brother to hear what I've got to say to you?

SHERMAN

What you've got to say to me? You've got as much to say to me as I've got to say to you.

CURTIS

What's all this about? Sherman's got no secrets from me.

LORD

Do you mean to marry Ann Carr?

SHERMAN

What's it to you anyway?

LORD

So it's true then. You think you're going to marry her after you play those matches. My God!

SHERMAN

Say, you—! Who do you think . . .

CURTIS

[*To* LORD.] What's on your mind?

LORD

[*To* SHERMAN.] If you're going to marry Ann Carr, you've got to tell her the truth about yourself first.

SHERMAN

[*To* CURTIS.] He's coocoo.

CURTIS

The truth about what?

LORD

He's got to tell Ann what's the matter with him.

SHERMAN

What's the matter with me? Say, you yellow . . .

CURTIS

[*To* LORD.] Wait a minute. Just what do you mean?

SHERMAN

It takes a yellow low-down swine like you . . .

LORD

I like the way these big strong men call everybody yellow. I know your sort of courage, Maxwell.

SHERMAN

You dirty sneak! . . . [*He starts threateningly towards* LORD.] I'll kill you.

LORD

What good will that do you? Will that save you? [*He holds his ground, does not move.* CURTIS *has hard work to keep* SHERMAN *off him.*]

SHERMAN

How long do you think I'm going to stand here listening to you? Will that save you! What do you mean—will that save you . . . ?

CURTIS

[*Crosses to between them.*] Wait a minute, Sherman. You let me handle this. There's a party downstairs.

SHERMAN

I can see through the whole thing. He's crazy about Ann himself and he's sore because she's keen about me. Why, the dirty son-of-a- . . .

CURTIS

[*Who is restraining* SHERMAN *from attacking* LORD.] Shut up. You want everybody in here?

SHERMAN

[*Who is attempting to free himself from* CURTIS.]

He's just a low-down bum that's drifted in here. He's living on charity right now. No more belongs in a college than . . .

LORD

No. I'm leaving that to you intellectuals.

SHERMAN

Shut up. God-damn you.

CURTIS

Cut it, Sherman. Use your head, will you?

LORD

He's got to tell Ann what's the matter with him.

SHERMAN

[*To* CURTIS.] Are you going to let him get away with this?

LORD

It's no use, Maxwell. I know.

CURTIS

[*Taking command.*] Sherman, go in the other room.

SHERMAN

Are you going to let him lie about me to Ann?

CURTIS

I'll take care of that. You go in the other room.

SHERMAN

[*Used to obedience.*] All right. I don't want to make any trouble here. Ann's birthday and all. [*He starts to*

*go door R. and turns.*] If you know what's good for you you'll keep out of my way after this. That's all I've got to say. [*He goes out.* CURTIS *follows him and closes the door. He then crosses to* LORD *who has seated himself in chair R. of desk.*]

CURTIS

[*Very suavely.*] You mustn't mind my little brother. Now where did you get this idea about Sherman?

LORD

What's the difference?

CURTIS

[*Ingratiating.*] Well, if I knew where you got your information, I might be able to show you.

LORD

If I did tell you you wouldn't believe it.

CURTIS

I might. Take a chance. Tell me.

LORD

[*Rising.*] It's not important how I know—the point is I know!

CURTIS

Oh! It was you Sherman met on the train going to Boston? Wasn't it?

LORD

No. He didn't tell me what was the matter with him and yet I know.

CURTIS

What? [LORD *by way of answering indicates his heart.*] I'll be perfectly frank with you. There's no reason why I shouldn't be. I won't deny that Sherman has a slight heart condition.

LORD

Slight!

CURTIS

Sure. Slight. Doesn't amount to anything at all. Strain of the games. Nine athletes out of ten have it. I'm going to give him six months to rest. No reason in the world Sherman shouldn't live as long as the next person. Nothing to worry about at all. I'm positive.

LORD

Are you?

CURTIS

Yes. I am. Do you think you know more about him than I do?

LORD

Yes. I do. I know more about him than anybody else in the world.

CURTIS

Say, are you crazy or what?

LORD

[*Nervously avoiding the subject.*] Say, have you got a cigarette?

CURTIS

[*Giving him one. Coming closer to him and after a moment.*] Just between ourselves. You see I'm taking you into my confidence. I agree with you about this marriage. I think it would be a mistake for my brother and for Miss Carr too. But there's another reason, a special reason why I shouldn't like this about my brother's condition to be noised about.

LORD

[*He has got* CURTIS. *He sucks him dry.*] Is there?

CURTIS

You see I'm being absolutely frank with you. You see Sherman is booked to play some professional matches all over the country. Now it would be pretty bad publicity if . . . any of this got out.

LORD

You're going to let him play football knowing . . . !

CURTIS

No reason in the world Sherman shouldn't play all the football he wants to! I tell you you've been misinformed.

LORD

How many times do I have to tell you? I haven't been informed. I tell you I know. . . . [*He points in the direction of the other room.*] Your brother is . . .

CURTIS

Say, do you take dope or something?

[*There is a sudden uprush of voices from the next room, among which can be heard:* A GIRL'S VOICE: Open the window, somebody! A MAN'S VOICE: I've never seen him like this before. A VOICE: Don't get excited, I tell you. ANOTHER VOICE: Nothing's the matter. ANOTHER VOICE: Give him air. ANOTHER VOICE: Undo his collar, etc. *These voices continue until the end of the act.*]

LORD

Sherman!

CURTIS

What's the matter?

LORD

[*Frightened himself at the instant revelation he gets.*] Better go down. . . .

[PHYLLIS *appears at door R.*]

PHYLLIS

Mr. Maxwell!

CURTIS

What is it?

PHYLLIS

[*Very scared.*] Your brother's fainted. [*She goes out.*]

CURTIS

God-damn you, you're responsible for this! [*He goes out.*]

LORD

[*To himself.*] No . . . ! No—no. I don't want it—I don't want it—no—no—no . . . [*He grips a chair-back as if to hold himself upright.*]

[DR. AVERY *comes in from door D.L.*]

DR. AVERY

[*Crossing to him.*] What's the matter, son?

LORD

[*Touched by hysteria.*] Dr. Avery, I want you to know—I didn't ask for this—I didn't want it—it's just —that I know . . .

DR. AVERY

What are you talking about?

[PHYLLIS *off-stage calls "Dr. Avery!"* DOUGLAS *comes in from R.*]

DOUGLAS

Uncle Avery, Sherman's terribly ill. . . .

[DR. AVERY *and* DOUGLAS *go out door R.* ANN *enters from door U.L.* DOUGLAS *calls to her as he goes out.* ANN *crosses room and is about to go out door R. when* LORD *stops her.*]

LORD

Ann, don't go in there.

ANN

What's the matter?

LORD

Sherman Maxwell is dead.

QUICK CURTAIN

# *Act Two*

## *ACT TWO*

SCENE: *Five years have elapsed since the end of Act One. The scene is the living room in a house off Fifth Avenue in New York, a beautiful, nobly proportioned room with great, dull-yellow curtained windows in the rear. A chastely square marble fireplace, old Florentine pieces—a richly mellow, rather somber room which could have been achieved only by a person of opulence and exquisite taste. The millionaire from whom* RAPHAEL LORD *bought the house is a gentleman of culture who has decided to abandon New York for Florence. A Sunday afternoon in January.*

AT RISE: CURTIS MAXWELL *is pacing up and down the room. He is obviously bored with waiting. He is soberly, faultlessly dressed. He is older, harder, more impenetrable than in Act One—then he had a certain sardonic geniality which is now gone.*

EDGAR MULLIN *is seated on chair D.S.L. complacently smoking a cigar. By his side is a brief-case. He is about forty.*

MULLIN

[*After a considerable pause.*] When do you think he'll be here?

MAXWELL

It's a major principle with him never to be on time.

MULLIN

It's comfortable enough here. I don't mind waiting.

MAXWELL

You wouldn't. Seems to me I spend half my life waiting for Lord!

MULLIN

Where do you suppose they keep the liquor? You'd think the butler would offer us a drink. We've been here nearly an hour. [*There is no reply.* CURTIS *continues to pace back and forth. As he approaches* MULLIN *takes some sheets from his brief-case.*] Look here, Curtis. Look at these figures on Ariandos.

MAXWELL

[*Taking the sheets.*] In—let's see—fourteen months . . . !

MULLIN

Lord's certainly got them hypnotized!

MAXWELL

[*Casually after a pause.*] I'm going down there Friday.

MULLIN

I wouldn't mind going to South America myself.

MAXWELL

I'll be rather glad to get away.

[*There is a pause.* MAXWELL *goes to table and sits in chair R. of it when* MULLIN *speaks.*]

MULLIN

It's remarkable when you come to think of it.

MAXWELL

What is?

MULLIN

Much as the public's been nicked on oil lately you'd think God-Almighty himself couldn't float an issue. Lord comes along and they fall all over themselves to buy the stock. You can't print the paper fast enough.

MAXWELL

Ariandos is different. There's oil down there. It looks like a big find. Maybe as big as Texas or Mexico—

MULLIN

Well, no matter what you say he's a remarkable young man.

MAXWELL

There's some luck in it, you know, Mullin.

MULLIN

Well, you can't say it's just luck. Somehow . . .

MAXWELL

[*Looking over a copy of the American Magazine on the table.*] You're like everybody else. Minute a man gets to the top the herd discovers he's a genius. [*Still looking over the magazine.*] Certainly likes to read about himself. "Meteoric Rise of Raphael Lord."

MULLIN

What does it say?

MAXWELL

[*Reading from the magazine.*] "Career characterized by audacity and vision— Brilliant execution of a merger in the automobile field established him as a financial genius— In the past eighteen months has emerged as the pioneer of a new oil region in the Republic of Ariandos. . . ." Pictures of his various homes . . . Westlands . . . Raphael Lord among his books. . . .

MULLIN

He's certainly riding high.

MAXWELL

[*Throwing the magazine aside.*] I can't read the guff . . . [*He picks up a newspaper from the table and looks its over.*] Another editorial!

MULLIN

Do you suppose there's going to be any trouble down there? Those papers of Vining's are printing a lot about Ariandos.

MAXWELL

Well, what of it?

MULLIN

What's behind this crusade of Vining's anyway?

MAXWELL

[*Seeing* ANN *come in.*] Drop it.

[ANN *comes in from U.R.*]

ANN

Please don't let me disturb you.

MAXWELL

How do you do, Mrs. Lord? We weren't doing a thing. You know my cousin, Edgar Mullin?

ANN

Of course.

MULLIN

[*Crossing and shaking her hand.*] I've had the pleasure.

ANN

I'm expecting Dr. Avery. I thought perhaps he'd come in.

MAXWELL

We were just marking time until Mr. Lord arrives.

ANN

Don't tell me he's late.

MAXWELL

Nearly an hour.

ANN

Wouldn't you like some tea—or a high-ball?

MULLIN

Yes Ma'am.

[BUTLER *comes in from L.*]

BUTLER

Dr. Avery, Madam.

[DR. AVERY *comes in.*]

ANN

Oh, Uncle Avery, I've been waiting for you.

[*They all nod to each other.*]

MAXWELL

If you don't mind we'll go upstairs. I'd like to go over these statements before he arrives.

ANN

Certainly. [*To* BUTLER.] Oh, Henry. Serve the gentlemen some whiskey in Mr. Lord's study.

MAXWELL

Thank you, Mrs. Lord.

[CURTIS *and* MULLIN *go upstairs.*]

DR. AVERY

[*They both cross to sofa.*] Who was he?

ANN

Don't you remember? Sherman's brother.

DR. AVERY

Oh! That's the man Douglas was talking about.

ANN

[*Sits R. end of sofa.*] Yes. I don't think he likes any of us.

DR. AVERY

[*Sits L. end of sofa.*] Why?

ANN

I can't get rid of the idea that he blames us for Sherman's death.

DR. AVERY

Well, that seems slightly unreasonable. [*A pause.*] Where's your fire-eater?

ANN

I don't know. Mr. Maxwell had an appointment with him. He's never on time, you know. Raphael likes to keep people waiting for him.

DR. AVERY

He never keeps me waiting.

ANN

He's fond of you, Uncle Avery. I really believe he is.

DR. AVERY

Well he's given me a marvelous time. But he's a bit too strenuous for me.

ANN

When are you going back?

DR. AVERY

Tomorrow noon. I just got my reservations. You know, my dear, Raphael has whirled us about so since I've been here that you and I have hardly had a chance to talk.

ANN

I know.

DR. AVERY

Your life now is so different from what it was. . . .

ANN

Yes. It is.

DR. AVERY

Let's see—it's nearly five years since you left home. Sleepy old Calvert must seem very remote and uninteresting to you now.

ANN

No. I miss Calvert. I miss the life there.

DR. AVERY

Do you? I shouldn't think you'd have the time.

ANN

I have more time than you think.

DR. AVERY

Have you?

ANN

Yes. You see, Uncle Avery, my life here is curiously disorganized. I don't do anything and yet I seem to have no leisure.

DR. AVERY

Do you see many people?

ANN

Very few. Raphael's business friends he occasionally brings home. [DR. AVERY *looks questioningly.*] ~~No,~~

they don't amuse me very much. Then I can't have any social life. I never can count on Raphael. He always calls up at the last minute to say he'll be an hour late. Then he's three hours late.

DR. AVERY

That must be trying.

ANN

At the same time I can't settle down to anything—to any work of my own.

DR. AVERY

Why not?

ANN

He needs me. Always telephoning. Must-see-you-right-away sort of thing.

DR. AVERY

Well, why don't you take it up with him?

ANN

Oh, I have. He says it'll all be different tomorrow. Of course it never is. It's worse. All that, though, is secondary.

DR. AVERY

To what?

ANN

I'm so glad you're here. I couldn't possibly talk like this to anyone else.

[LORD *comes in from L. He is febrile, swift, con-*

*scious of omnipotence, coördinated on a high plane. Carelessly dressed, though expensively, with a gardenia in his buttonhole.*]

LORD

Hello . . . sorry!

DR. AVERY

You're late, young man. Five years ago I could have had you up before the dean for this but now I'm helpless.

[LORD *shakes* AVERY'S *hand and kisses* ANN.]

LORD

[*At back of sofa.*] Doesn't she look nice? I made her buy that dress. I wanted to get back earlier, but I was held up for speeding—till I told the cop who I was.

ANN

Did the cop apologize?

LORD

No. I showed him some of the trimmings on my new car. He was fascinated. Wait till you see her. Does ninety without the slightest . . . just humas. Wait till I take you out in her.

DR. AVERY

Ninety! You won't take *me* out in her.

LORD

You know there are only two others like her in the

world. One belongs to the president of the Continental National and the other to the King of Spain.

ANN

Two others like her! We wouldn't ride in such a common car, would we, Uncle Avery?

LORD

Well, I would. I'm no snob. By the way, Ann, I won't be able to make the concert tonight.

ANN

Oh, Raphael, I did so want . . .

LORD

No. There are two geologists coming for dinner—very interesting men. . . .

ANN

But this is the third you've missed and it's Toscanini's last.

LORD

As a matter of fact I get pretty restless listening to these programs. The conductor looks so grotesque. I wonder what he'd look like making those absurd gestures if the music stopped.

ANN

There's such a magnificent program tonight—Beethoven and a new Ravel.

LORD

Doctor Avery can take you. Where are Doug and

Phyl? I've been out buying a wedding present for them. Where are they? I want to tell them about it.

ANN

They'll be here. Phyl's just telephoned.

LORD

Has Maxwell come?

ANN

He's upstairs. He's been waiting an hour.

LORD

Curious man. One of the few people in the world who is impervious to my charm. He dislikes me!

[*This is simply a phenomenon to* LORD.]

AVERY

Does he? I can't believe it.

LORD

More than that. He hates me. Strange fellow.

AVERY

Why does he hate you?

LORD

Well, for one thing he has an enormous capacity for hate. I can understand that. So have I.

ANN

You say that with such pride.

LORD

Well, I also have an enormous capacity for love. You know that, Ann.

[PHYLLIS *and* DOUGLAS *come in from L.* PHYLLIS *crosses to sofa—kisses* DR. AVERY *and sits at* ANN'S *right.* DOUGLAS *shakes* LORD'S *hand as he crosses to chair D.R. of fireplace.*]

DOUGLAS

Hello everybody.

LORD

You're very dressy, aren't you?

DOUGLAS

It's Sunday.

LORD

Well, how's the married man?

DOUGLAS

So far, so good.

AVERY

That sounds ominous.

DOUGLAS

As a matter of fact, Phyl and I have just been having our first quarrel.

ANN

Don't let him misunderstand you, Phyl.

DOUGLAS

I want to go to Ariandos with Maxwell.

PHYLLIS

If he does I want to go too.

LORD

It's no place for a woman.

PHYLLIS

Then it's no place for a man either.

ANN

Does he have to go?

LORD

Of course he doesn't.

DOUGLAS

I don't feel comfortable about this fellow Maxwell.

LORD

No?

DOUGLAS

You leave so much to Maxwell.

LORD

Less than you think, Douglas.

DOUGLAS

You're in so deep in this Ariandos business.

LORD

Maxwell can't affect it. Nothing can affect it.

PHYLLIS

Isn't he wonderful? The way he just knows everything. . . .

LORD

Quite right, Phyllis. I'm one of the few people in the world who's practically omniscient.

PHYLLIS

What does that mean?

LORD

And since you adore me so sincerely I've got a little surprise for you—your wedding present at last.

PHYLLIS

[*Excited.*] Oh. What is it?

LORD

Are you interested, Douglas?

DOUGLAS

In a detached way.

LORD

[*Crossing to table L. for plans which he left there when he entered.*] Three guesses. Ann, what do you think?

ANN

Old silver.

LORD

No. Douglas?

DOUGLAS

Bath mats.

LORD

What do you see in him, Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

~~Oh, don't mind him.~~ Linens.

LORD

~~No.~~

AVERY

~~Do I get a guess?~~

LORD

[*Crossing to back of sofa with plans.*] No. You're not even warm—any of you. It's a house.

PHYLLIS

A house . . . !

LORD

Well, maybe it's a cottage. ~~Anyway it's got a roof on it.~~ It caught my eye one day last week when I was driving to Connecticut—so I bought it this morning. —It's a tricky little place.

PHYLLIS

Is he joking? I couldn't bear it.

LORD

No, I'm not joking. It's in Rye— Just off the Boston Post Road. It overlooks the water and it's all ready to live in. It's waiting for you. [*He stands back of the sofa "demonstrating" the plans which he has given to* ANN. PHYLLIS *is at* ANN'S *right on sofa.* DR. AVERY *is on her left and* DOUGLAS *now crosses up from chair D.R. to* PHYLLIS' *R.* PHYLLIS, *enraptured, keeps mak-*

*ing inarticulate cries of delight.* DOUGLAS *wavers between gratitude and embarrassment.*]

PHYLLIS

Doug—isn't it too . . . !

DOUGLAS

Gee, R. L.

ANN

Oh, it is charming.

LORD

This really gives you no idea of it.

PHYLLIS

What color it is?

LORD

It's white.—No—sort of cream color. What's your idea of bringing that up?

ANN

It's probably pink.

PHYLLIS

Green blinds?

LORD

Don't ask me about colors, Phyllis. In this wing is the kitchen. No, wait—maybe it's this wing.—Anyway the hall runs straight through. The living room is on this side—rather biggish fireplace—grand piano. . . .

PHYLLIS

It's furnished!

LORD

Completely.

AVERY

En prince.

DOUGLAS

Gee, R. L.

LORD

In back of the living room is the library. Biggish fireplace in that too. Brass andirons.

PHYLLIS

Brass and . . .

LORD

Well, maybe they're gold. I dunno. They look like brass. This is the dining room. These windows overlook the water. The sound's out there. There's a nice garden in the back. Doesn't look like much now but they say in the summer . . .

PHYLLIS

Doug—a garden.

DOUGLAS

Well—why not?

LORD

[*Taking plans abruptly from* ANN *and, turning the page, gives them back to her.*] Let's go upstairs. Four bedrooms—beds in 'em. Two bathrooms—baths in 'em —water all drawn and everything.

AVERY

Can you get along with two bathrooms, Phyllis?

DOUGLAS

[*Coming back to chair D.R.*] Well, if you ask me it's inadequate. Suppose we have a house party?

LORD

With two baths? I guess you'll have to take turns.

DOUGLAS

Honest ~~R. L.~~, I don't see how we deserve all this.

LORD

[*In great spirits.*] Neither do I. Just gives me a chance to feel like God. [LORD *feels the truth of what he has just said in the moment of utterance. Then with an air of discovery.*] ~~You know~~ that's perfectly true what I ~~just said~~! Marvelous sensation.

PHYLLIS

Did you ever see such a darling front door?

LORD

It's Gothic—no, maybe it's Colonial, I dunno. Back here there's a little gravel walk. There's a flower garden with a sun dial in the center and benches all around it.

PHYLLIS

Stone benches?

LORD

No, concrete. Anyway, you can't sit on 'em.

AVERY

Does it say Tempus Fugit on the sun dial?

LORD

It does! Clever people these professors. Well, this is beginning to bore me. Here, take your God-damn cottage.

PHYLLIS

You're just the kindest—sweetest . . .

LORD

[*Crosses around sofa to chair L. of sofa.*] Shut up, Phyllis. It just meant signing a check. Doctor, do you remember that University I promised to endow for you at Calvert? Perhaps it isn't so nebulous now.

DOUGLAS

[*Who has crossed around R. of sofa to above* LORD.] Raphael, I've got to talk to you seriously about Ariandos.

LORD

You know, Doctor, he has nothing on his mind but Ariandos.

DOUGLAS

But listen, Rafe . . .

LORD

Well, what is it?

DOUGLAS

I don't like the look of things down there. They're doing their best to stir up feeling among the natives.

LORD

Let 'em stir!

DOUGLAS

Vining's papers . . .

LORD

I'll stop Vining.

DOUGLAS

How?

LORD

Never mind. I'll do it.

DOUGLAS

But how?

LORD

You know, Doctor, Vining thinks he has an emissary in my camp. I have one in his.

DOUGLAS

Who?

LORD

Maxwell.

DOUGLAS

Maxwell! Then I was right Maxwell is . . .

LORD

Yes. Maxwell *is!*

DOUGLAS

And you're letting him go to Ariandos alone.

LORD

Douglas, will you go back to your cottage?

DOUGLAS

But don't you see the damage he might do?—Sabotage to our properties.

LORD

I tell you, Douglas, it will not happen.

AVERY

Do you realize, Douglas, you are keeping him from giving me a University?

LORD

Uncle Avery, how would you like to start one in Ariandos? The Raphael Lord University. You shall be its first president.

AVERY

Too warm. I couldn't stand the climate.

LORD

I'm serious. I am. You see Ariandos means more to me than just an oil-field—more than profits. For the first time in my life I shall be able . . . Would you like to see, Doctor, what I'm really after?

AVERY

Reveal!

LORD

Would it interest you to see a practical idealist at work?

AVERY

It would fascinate me.

LORD

Right. You shall. Let's have in Maxwell.

AVERY

Mullin too?

LORD

Mullin? Did I ask Mullin to come here? Sure, have him in. I'll get rid of him. [DOUGLAS *goes out.*] I'm crazy about Douglas. When I first met him at Calvert he was fumbling and ineffectual.

AVERY

Don't tell me you're going to make a go-getter out of Douglas.

LORD

Why not? Better than an introspective. . . .

PHYLLIS

When can I see it? I can't wait to see it.

LORD

Any time. Drive out today.

PHYLLIS

Will you come, Ann?

ANN

I'd love to but it's Uncle Avery's last day.

PHYLLIS

He can come too.

LORD

No. I want Doctor Avery with me today.

AVERY

That settles that.

LORD

Got to talk to you.

AVERY

I love to be ordered about.

[DOUGLAS *returns with* MULLIN *and* MAXWELL.]

LORD

Well, gentlemen . . . Do you know Doctor Avery? Mrs. Carr? [*They all nod.*] Phyllis you go into the library and call up your country house.

PHYLLIS

Call up . . . !

LORD

You have a telephone . . . Rye 47. And the housekeeper is Mrs. Davis. Call up and introduce yourself.

[PHYLLIS *goes off to the library L. repeating "Rye 47" and "Mrs. Davis."*]

ANN

I'll go with you, Phyl.

LORD

No, you stay here. Well, gentlemen?

MULLIN

You asked me to bring in a statement.

LORD

Yes.

MULLIN

I hope you'll be satisfied with the totals, Mr. Lord.

LORD

Amazing credulity of people. On my bare word, I might be a liar and a humbug, but a hundred thousand people turn over their savings to me simply because I suggest that it might be profitable. Credulity and greed!

MULLIN

But there is oil down there, isn't there, Mr. Lord?

LORD

Do you own some, Mullin?

MULLIN

Every penny I've got.

LORD

Well, I hope there's oil down there. Every cent I own is in Ariandos.

MULLIN

[*Sits chair L. of table.*] Well, what's good enough for you ought to be good enough for the public, Mr. Lord.

LORD

[*Handing back the statement.*] Thanks. I'll be in the office in the morning.

MULLIN

[*Rising.*] Shall I wait for you, Curtis?

LORD

No, Maxwell is staying.

MULLIN

Good-afternoon. [*He goes out.*]

LORD

Not crazy about your cousin, Maxwell. Typical yes-man.

MAXWELL

Your method doesn't exactly encourage initiative, Mr. Lord.

LORD

Am I domineering? Douglas defend me.

DOUGLAS

I don't have to defend you.

MAXWELL

If you don't mind my being perfectly frank . . .

LORD

No. Go right ahead. I've asked these people to stay. Say what's on your mind.

MAXWELL

Very well then, I don't see the point in my going to Ariandos at all.

LORD

Why not?

MAXWELL

You're floating an issue down there on the basis of

maximum production. Before the geologists and I come back, perhaps even before we get there, the issue will probably be entirely bought up.

LORD

[*His tone is slightly indulgent, an expert talking to a novice.*] It's certain to be.

MAXWELL

What's the use of my going then?

LORD

I'm not sending you to look for oil, Maxwell.

MAXWELL

Well, if you're not sending me to look for oil . . .

LORD

No.

MAXWELL

Oh! You want me to see Ramenez?

LORD

No.

MAXWELL

No?

LORD

By the time you arrive there'll probably be another president. No, I've got a different mission for you.

MAXWELL

Yes? What is it?

LORD

Sit down. I want you to find sites for cities. Places where people can live.

MAXWELL

I'm not a city-planner.

LORD

I don't want specialists just yet.

MAXWELL

I think what they need down there is not a landscape gardener. They want more machine-guns.

ANN

Machine-guns!

LORD

Well, just in case . . .

ANN

Mr. Maxwell. What is the situation down there?

MAXWELL

Hard to say exactly. The natives are being armed against us, Mrs. Lord. Of course, our marines are down there. But as I say, they need more machine-guns.

LORD

All this is just a phase. . . . I see far beyond these minor troubles. . . .

AVERY

Trade follows the flag. Bigger and better navies.

LORD

Well? Why not?

AVERY

I don't believe in this sort of thing. I believe in letting those little fellows alone.

LORD

Of course you do. Because it's easy. Because it enables you to loll around in sleepy villages and doze. . . .

AVERY

But don't overlook the fact that occasionally we sleepy fellows have to wake up long enough to repair the damage done by you ruthless ones.

LORD

I'll accomplish more with my ruthlessness than a thousand of you sentimental radicals with your amiability. Wait till you see what I make out of that place. A paradise! I'll provide all the things I missed when I was a boy. Do you know what hunger is? What poverty is? What tenement-crowding is? What frustration is? No, of course you don't. I have my own ideas about education—about labor problems. You wait until you see what I make of Ariandos! I'll build model villages—houses with patios—open-air schools and vital teachers for the children—a happy cultural community founded on a sound industrialism. A place for the slums of the world to disgorge.

AVERY

It's been tried. You know it's never worked.

LORD

Tried? By whom? Theorists? High-brows? Professors?

AVERY

It's a glittering idea except that the slum-dwellers notoriously love their slums.

LORD

Don't be so damn silly, Avery.

ANN

[*Rises and crosses to fireplace.*] Raphael!

AVERY

You think you're going to lure them out of the slums with a prospectus—derricks among the palm-trees—You can't do it. No. Not even you.

LORD

Oh, can't I? You think I'll be held up by a stale cliché like that? While you're handing out these sterile platitudes to your students I'll go ahead. I'll show you how it's done. [ANN *starts off U.R.* LORD, *without seeing her, feels she is going.*] Don't go, Ann.

AVERY

It's visionary.

LORD

Visionary! Of course I am. If you don't see things ahead you can't do 'em. Visionary—plus will. Will! That is the raft on which I'll make this immense migration. The trouble with most idealists is that none of

them can add or substract. I'll make a Utopia out of Ariandos, run by expert accountants.

AVERY

A Utopia run for profit. Eh?

LORD

Why not? Do you know why most Utopias fail? Because no one makes any money out of 'em.

MAXWELL

In any case I'm hardly the man.

LORD

You're precisely the man. Do you know why I send you? Because you've lived in the streets of cities as I have. . . .

[*Telephone rings.*]

DOUGLAS

Do you want me to take it?

LORD

No. I'll take it. [*He takes up phone.*] Hello. Yes. Don't mumble. Speak up.—Yes.—Yes.—Yes. Where was Warren?—Why wasn't he on the job?—How many? Why didn't they mow down a couple hundred? Then perhaps they'd learn to leave our stuff alone. Who? Vining? —No, never mind.—I'll tend to him. [*He hangs up, white with anger.*]

DOUGLAS

[*Crosses to* RAPHAEL.] What is it, R. L.?

LORD

The office. Mr. Vining.

DOUGLAS

What's happened?

LORD

Some humanitarian down there—probably a professor—got the bright idea of translating a few of Vining's editorials and distributing them among the natives. They burned some of our derricks and a couple of dozen or so were shot.

DOUGLAS

More copy for Vining.

AVERY

There you are!

LORD

Yes. You ought to be writing for Vining, Avery. Your sit-back-and-do-nothing ideas would suit him admirably.

ANN

Raphael!

LORD

I'm always being stopped by some sentimental noodle . . . I'm sorry. However, that's not important. Vining is. I'll let him deal with my lawyer. Douglas, get Hollister up here right away.

DOUGLAS

I believe he's arguing a case out of town.

LORD

Get one of his partners then. I'll teach Vining he can't fool with me. Do you know what he's trying to do? Steal my property in Ariandos by stirring up trouble among the natives. Well, he can't do it. He's got a well-known name behind him. They're both in on another little deal together which isn't exactly immaculate and I can pin it on both of them. I'll give them publicity they won't welcome right now. Douglas—no, Maxwell, go upstairs and get me Hollister. I don't care where he is, get him. Tell him I'll give Vining twenty-four hours to get his people out of Ariandos or I'll take it to court. ~~God,~~ if I ever got on the stand in a case like this, the picturesque things I could say about those two babies. I'll be right up, Maxwell.

[MAXWELL *goes upstairs U.R.*]

LORD

[*To* DOUGLAS—*very pleased with himself.*] Didn't I tell you I had an emissary in Vining's camp? Couldn't you hear his brains grinding? Don't you love him upstairs about to telephone Vining? A neat little way to get a message to him—no service charge.

DOUGLAS

But aren't you going to start a law-suit?

LORD

It won't be necessary. As soon as my threat of publicity reaches Vining's silent partner he'll call a halt to

the whole business. [*He crosses C. for a cigarette.*] Doctor, doesn't this amuse you?

DOUGLAS

But you can't hush up those shootings down there. When that gets out what's going to happen to our stock? It'll go way down.

LORD

Of course it will.

DOUGLAS

Thirty or forty points perhaps.

LORD

The lower the better.

DOUGLAS

What!

LORD

I knew there'd be some trouble down there. I have orders in half a dozen brokers' offices to pick up every share that's offered.

DOUGLAS

I don't . . .

LORD

Of course you don't. [*He sits chair L. of sofa and takes a cable from his pocket.*] Here. Listen to this. It's from Warren. [*He reads.*] Brought in gusher today on Diamond section—estimate yield fifteen thousand barrels a day.

DOUGLAS

[*Taking cable.*] Fifteen thousand barrels a day. My ~~God,~~ Raphael, that's wonderful.

LORD

Not bad. Notice the date, Douglas.

DOUGLAS

The sixteenth. Ten days ago. You've known this for ten days; why have you kept quiet?

LORD

I've been holding this in reserve. On Tuesday morning I'll announce it. It'll send our stock sky-high. This is what is known as an inside tip, Professor. Better give Douglas your savings tomorrow morning.

AVERY

I haven't any savings.

LORD

I'll lend you some.—I see all around them. I've got the whole thing right in the palm of my hand. [*He rises.*] Look at that hand! Visionary! Is that the hand of a dreamer? Look at the breadth—look at the width! You know, Rodin would have liked to have done that hand.

DOUGLAS

~~My God~~ Heavens! You've known this for ten days!

LORD

[*Crossing to back of sofa.*] Big business! You know,

Doctor, it's child's play. People think this is so mysterious, so extraordinary. It isn't really. It just requires one thing . . . [*He starts to go off through 1st arch.*]

DOUGLAS

Genius, Rafe!

LORD

[*Turning.*] Well, I wouldn't exactly call it that, Douglas. [*He goes off upstairs U.R.*]

DOUGLAS

He is a genius.

AVERY

Whenever he does a thing he's sure it's the right thing to do just because he's done it.

DOUGLAS

[*Aware of the impression* LORD *has made on them.*] You mustn't take everything Raphael says too literally. He's up against a tremendous job, and he's really much more tired inside than you have any idea of. Vining and his papers are a bit too much, you know. He's an absolute racketeer.

AVERY

[*Who has crossed U.C.*] Last night at dinner I sat next to Philo Estabrook. He's a man of different stripe than Vining isn't he?

DOUGLAS

Pink liberal.

ANN

[*Rises and crosses to front of sofa.*] What did Mr. Estabrook say?

AVERY

He's writing an editorial: "What are our marines doing in Ariandos?"

DOUGLAS

[*With heat.*] They're protecting American property and American lives, that's what they're doing.

ANN

Doug . . . Doug.

DOUGLAS

It's a damn shame you can't realize what he's up against. [*He goes off to library U.L.*]

AVERY

Can that be the shy, rather discouraged boy I knew at Calvert?

ANN

He's changed. [*She crosses to left end of sofa.*] Well, what do you make of us? What do you make of our Utopias founded on machine-guns?

AVERY

[*Sits in chair L. of sofa.*] You're likely to know more about it than I do.

ANN

[*Sits on L. arm of sofa.*] What did Estabrook say to you last night? This article he is going to write on Ariandos?

AVERY

Oh, well . . .

ANN

What did he say?

AVERY

Briefly it was to the effect that no small country which finds itself rich in oil can feel confident of its political security. The more you stir things up, the greater the chance of bloodshed. First thing you know they're identifying dividends with national honor, and there you are.

ANN

Why doesn't Raphael come out and say so? Why does he suddenly pretend to be an altruist? Utopia!

AVERY

The strange thing to me is that I really think he believes it when he says it.

ANN

It's impossible to know what he believes.

AVERY

Amazing fellow! Talent—great talent—possessed by a fanatical self-belief. That combination is unbeatable in any field—except perhaps the field of thought.

ANN

That sort of victory no longer interests Raphael.

AVERY

Used to—great intellectual curiosity.

ANN

He's changed. As far as I can make out now all he cares for is possession—obsessed by a sort of gluttony for power.

AVERY

Great charm. . . .

ANN

Yes. Yes. Yes. He turns it on.

AVERY

And off!

ANN

I felt so ashamed just now when he flared up at you. . . .

AVERY

[*Deprecating.*] Oh—

ANN

I don't think he meant anything by it—personal. It's just that—I've noticed it especially in the last year or so. . . . He can't stand contradiction, any obstacle of any sort . . . even in little things. . . .

AVERY

Well, he doesn't exactly hide his light under a bushel . . .

ANN

I feel as if something is going to happen to him—in his mind, I mean. He's like a man propelled alone through space— This mania that he's clairvoyant, unconquerable . . . it is a mania, isn't it?

AVERY

Well, it's an illusion that in his case seems to have great pragmatic value. And see how life confirms his fixed idea. It all works as a charmed circle—his complete belief in his powers gives him the audacity to act. It enables him to cut through hordes of timid, uncertain men. Magnificent! I love it.

ANN

Sometimes I think—well, here's this great current of energy—a terrific urge toward power; have I the right to get in the way of it? And even at his worst, I feel—that he's rather whistling in the dark. I understand him better than I used to. His childhood must have been dreadful. He grew up in wretched surroundings. He was starved. He loved beauty—longed for some sort of expression, for power. He felt in himself immense abilities, immense strength. . . .

AVERY

And nothing to use it on. His soul cried out for some manifestation—to distinguish him—to make him unique.

ANN

Yes. This belief in his gift. . . . But isn't it amazing that he's so overwhelmingly right? His career . . . how do you account for it, Uncle Avery?

AVERY

Intuition plus coincidence, and at the bottom; a sound unconscious reasoning, combined with a marvelous memory for the times he's been right and not so good for the times he's been wrong. Oh, I'm not denying he has great ability which almost amounts to genius. After all, what is genius but a sort of sixth sense, an uncanny instinct for utilizing the accidental; so highly developed that it may at times approach clairvoyance?

ANN

I want to help him. But all this makes it so impossible! I can't quite get near him.

AVERY

He seems to adore you. . . .

ANN

He reduces me to nothing.

AVERY

He couldn't do that. [*He laughs.*]

ANN

Why do you laugh? Does that sound vain?

AVERY

Well, when he's in the room I feel like a white corpuscle.

ANN

At one time we had a beautiful companionship. At Calvert we used to read poetry together, make plans for the future. Oh, he's gay and humorous with me but it's all a kind of—condescension. He puts me off with charm, with a kind of adoration that is . . . an ecstasy of self-discovery. I want simplicity. Where is it going? What will it do to those who get in the way of it? What will it do to me? What will it do to Raphael himself? I get intimations that trouble me. . . .

AVERY

[*Rises and puts his arm around her shoulder.*] Life will offer some corrective.

ANN

Or is it that I'm jealous because other things mean more to him than I do? Am I as commonplace as that?

[LORD *comes in from U.R.*]

LORD

Doctor Avery, what's she been saying about me? You've been discussing me, haven't you?

AVERY

We have!

LORD

What's the matter with me, Ann?

ANN

You're perfect.

LORD

I know it. God, she's a lucky woman.

ANN

Why are you in such high spirits?

LORD

I've been upstairs juggling figures with Maxwell.

ANN

I thought you were laying out the City-Beautiful.

LORD

We are. We're just in the suburbs. You know, Doctor, one of these days you and I will retire to the Academe and write a history of Utopias.

ANN

Just a little thing he'll turn out over night.

LORD

Not at all. We'll take a week-end.

AVERY

Not less.

ANN

I wish I had a list of his literary projects, Uncle Avery. They are encyclopedic. I imagine if Raphael ever did get down to writing—with a mind like his—he ought to write like . . . H. G. Wells.

LORD

H. G. Wells! Superficial! H. G. Wells! I would be at once encyclopedic and profound—cameo and panorama. H. G. Wells! Look at her, Uncle Avery, isn't she lovely! I'm crazy about that dress. You know Ann doesn't know how lovely she is. [*He sits at her R. and takes her face in his hand.*] Look at that face. It's classic. [*He turns her head to get a side view.*] No, it's modern. No. It's timeless.

ANN

[*To* AVERY.] He's turning it on.

LORD

What's that?

AVERY

Never mind. That's a little secret between Ann and me.

LORD

What's she been saying about me? [*He rises.*]

AVERY

Well, she says that you're a sinister, mysterious figure.

ANN

Don't tell him that. You'll delight him.

LORD

Mysterious? I? Why I'm engaged constantly in an orgy of self-revelation. I'm a positive exhibitionist! [*They are amused.*] You don't believe me. Well, ask me

something. What do you want to know? Anything at all.

AVERY

All right. I'll ask you something. Dare I, Ann? [*He rises.*]

ANN

Risk anything.

AVERY

Well, I'd like to know your right name. Wouldn't you, Ann?

ANN

That's a delicate subject. I never approach it.

LORD

Really do you want to know my right name?

AVERY

Consumed.

LORD

[*Crossing to back of sofa.*] All right. I'll tell you. But absolutely . . .

AVERY

[*Sitting at* ANN'S *L. on sofa.*] I'm a tomb.

LORD

Are you prepared for the worst?

ANN

Oh, Raphael.

AVERY

The suspense is killing.

LORD

No matter what it is—you promise not to leave me?

ANN

I promise.

LORD

All right—prepare. . . . My right name is . . .

[PHYLLIS *bursts into the room followed by* DOUGLAS *from the library U.L.*]

PHYLLIS

[*Dancing with excitement.*] I spoke to Mrs. Davis . . .

ANN

Sshh!

[*Both* ANN *and* AVERY *look up to* RAPHAEL *for the answer.*]

LORD

Too late! The spell is broken. [*He crosses to* DOUGLAS.] I'm not sending you with Maxwell after all, Douglas. He's going alone. I've just told him.

DOUGLAS

It's a mistake, R. L.

LORD

Don't you worry.

DOUGLAS

I don't like it.

LORD

Maxwell can't hurt me. [*To* PHYLLIS.] Did you speak to Mrs. Davis? What did she say?

PHYLLIS

She wants us to come out. She says she'll have supper for us.

LORD

You and Douglas take the Packard.

ANN

I'd rather like to see the cottage.

LORD

No. We'll follow. Right, Douglas.

DOUGLAS

Come on, Phyl.

PHYLLIS

But I'm afraid if we leave you behind you won't come.

ANN

Why can't we all go together?

LORD

[*Thinking for reasons.*] Maxwell's still upstairs.

PHYLLIS

We'll wait.

LORD

No, you run along. [*Beneath his facetiousness there is an unalterable determination—the possibility of disagree-*

*ment is ruled out.* DOUGLAS *is impatient to carry out* LORD'S *slightest wish.*]

DOUGLAS

Lady, don't argue.

[LORD *leads* PHYLLIS *and* DOUGLAS *toward door L.*]

DR. AVERY

What are you going to do with me?

LORD

[*Turning to him.*] I've got that all worked out. [*To* DOUG *and* PHYLLIS *as they go out.*] Hurry up!

DOUGLAS

[*At door.*] Good-bye, R. L. You probably won't show up.

LORD

I'll do my darnedest.

DOUGLAS

[*As he goes off.*] Anyway, see you in the morning.

PHYLLIS

[*Has gone off ahead of* DOUG *ad libing.*] We'll wait out there for you . . . I'm so excited. . . . Come on, Doug. . . .

LORD

[*Closing the door and crossing back C.*] Now I'll tell you what I want you to do, Doctor.

ANN

You've no idea of going to the country, Raphael.

LORD

That's perfectly true. This is a contrivance to see you alone.

AVERY

So that's it.

ANN

Yes. I've been at Westlands.

LORD

As a matter of fact I haven't seen her alone in weeks.

AVERY

You know the thing about him is that he always has a program—and he always wants things more intensely than anyone else in the neighborhood. That's the secret of his success.

LORD

[*Practically lifting* DR. AVERY *from the sofa.*] That's perfectly true. Most people haven't any idea what they want and what they do want, they want only mildly. Is that a good sentence?—I don't think so.

DR. AVERY

Incorrigible!

LORD

[*Walking him U.C. toward C. arch.*] I've got a going away present for you, Doctor.

AVERY

Going away?

LORD

You'll find it in the library wrapped in manila paper.

AVERY

Is this a bribe?

LORD

Well, it's a surprise. Guess what it is?

AVERY

I haven't got your intuition.

[*They are now at the top of the steps of alcove in the C. arch.*]

LORD

Well, it's a first-edition of Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici."

AVERY

[*Overcome.*] Oh, Ann. This makes up for everything. Thomas Browne! My favorite author. And a first edition!

LORD

[*Leading him toward library.*] Well, maybe it's a second!

AVERY

Ann, how do you resist him?

LORD

[*As he urges* AVERY *through the door.*] She doesn't. [*Calling to* AVERY *who is now off.*] There—on the top of the table.

AVERY

[*From off-stage.*] All right—I'll find it.

[*There is a silence. The glow lighted in him by the irradiation of his own charm simmers down. He crosses down to* ANN.]

ANN

Well? Why all this maneuvering? You have a way of almost pushing people out of a room.

LORD

I had to see you alone a minute.

ANN

Why? All of a sudden?

LORD

I felt you were hating me.

ANN

You're so violent in your expressions, Raphael.

LORD

I call things by their names. It was something I said to Dr. Avery. You wanted to get out of the room because I was in it. [*She turns away from him.*] You're always like that, always straining to get away from me. Why?

ANN

Shall I tell you?

LORD

Do you think I'm afraid of what you can tell me?

ANN

A pebble against a Colossus—of course!

LORD

[*Crossing to table above sofa for cigarette which he lights.*] You resent me.

ANN

Yes.

LORD

Why? Why? You've always resented me. Tell me.

ANN

I will. I want to. I've been wanting to.

LORD

Tell me then.

ANN

Your way of sweeping aside other people's opinions and other people's desires, as if they were so much—spindrift,—irritates me beyond words. Just now your insolence to Uncle Avery . . .

LORD

[*Sitting at L. end of sofa.*] Why didn't you wear those jewels?

ANN

What jewels?

LORD

The new ones . . . the ones . . .

ANN

They don't go with this dress.

LORD

Why didn't you wear another dress?

ANN

You never listen to me, do you? You never have.

LORD

All right. Go ahead. I'll listen.

ANN

It's just—part of everything else. . . .

LORD

I'll listen. Go ahead.

ANN

Your insolence to Uncle Avery . . .

LORD

I do wish you'd worn those jewels. I wanted old Avery to see them.

ANN

Your contemptuous manner toward him made me furious. . . .

LORD

I love Uncle Avery.

ANN

Why do you insult him?

LORD

Do I?

ANN

Uncle Avery is a distinguished scholar. Intellectually you are a parvenu—and Uncle Avery is an aristocrat.

LORD

He didn't seem to mind.

ANN

I minded.

LORD

Well, what if I do send those people down there?

ANN

I should still say that you're insufferably arrogant, insufferably . . .

LORD

What if I do do it—and I will do it—it will only prove that Uncle Avery had no right to tell me what I can do.

[*Logically she finds herself, for the moment, in an impasse. She turns to other scores.*]

ANN

[*Sitting at R. end of sofa.*] Raphael, there's a touch of charlatanism in everything you do.

LORD

I'm perfectly sincere. I may send a half a million people to Ariandos and if I do, must I pretend that I love them? The idea of loving half a million morons one doesn't know, is just funny to me. Hard enough to love

the people one does know. The other is cant. Cant like the politicians' speeches—I love the French people—I love the common American man. I adore the poor. —What do speeches like that mean, if any?

ANN

You're certainly clever in justifying yourself—!

LORD

I expect to make a decent place of Ariandos—bath-tubs and gardens, but I do it as an economic measure. I do it because it will save me trouble and insurrection in the future. I do it because it'll be pleasanter for me to observe when I go down there. Most of all I do it because it's a terrific job and I'm probably the only man alive who could pull it off. But I don't do it out of affection for an anonymous horde in the slums of fifty cities. They're raw material, that's all. I use it—that's all.

ANN

Blood and iron.

LORD

There's a lot to be said for blood and iron. If Russian Communism is a success, it'll be because the leaders are first rate executioners,—the first Utopians who knew how to handle machine-guns.

ANN

And this is the boy who used to read Shelley aloud to me at Calvert. . . .

LORD

Why shouldn't I read Shelley? Napoleon read Goethe.

ANN

This is the boy who was ambitious to become a great scholar!

LORD

What makes you think I won't? I'm young yet. Silly divorce nowadays between scholarship and business. I shall be both. Francis Bacon.

ANN

[*Wryly.*] I seem to have heard that before.

LORD

You wait. Give me time.

ANN

For years, you've been saying the same thing. But something always interferes. One scheme after another. Now, it's Ariandos. . . .

LORD

Ariandos is my last. Ariandos is my swan-song. Can you imagine, Ann, when I apply to literature the concentration that I give to business, when I surround it with the same amazing . . . God! Ann, it's such a relief to talk to you. Why are you always at Westlands? You know I'm not a money-grubber, Ann.

ANN

I haven't the faintest idea what you are. . . .

LORD

Ann, would you like the Nobel Prize? I'll get it for your birthday. I mean it, I'll do it. Don't you think I could make my mark in scholarship?

ANN

Of course you could if you wanted to, but do you want to? It seems to me you're more serious when you're talking about business than when you're talking about scholarship.

LORD

That shows how superficial you are.

ANN

Perhaps I am. . . . Tell me, Raphael . . .

LORD

What? I'll tell you anything. I'm in a mood to tell you anything.

ANN

Why is Douglas so worried about Curtis Maxwell?

LORD

As a matter of fact Doug's instinct is perfectly sound.

ANN

Really?

LORD

Yes. Maxwell hates me.

ANN

I've felt it.

LORD

He's just lying around the corner—waiting to knife me.

ANN

Why do you employ him then?

LORD

It amuses me. He's safer where I can keep an eye on him.

ANN

Then you're not sending him down there to find cites for cities.

LORD

No, merely to confirm him in the impression that I'm an eccentric.

ANN

And to confirm the rest of us in the impression that you are a philanthropist.

LORD

You don't expect me to be consistent, do you, Ann?

ANN

Why does Maxwell hate you?

LORD

What?

ANN

Why does he hate you? Tell me that.

LORD

It goes back to that night at Calvert. I foresaw that

Sherman was going to die—heart you know,—I told him he mustn't marry you. He was very upset—angry . . .

ANN

You told him—you upset him, knowing his condition?

LORD

Well, Curtis was going to let him play some professional matches. He would never have survived them.

ANN

He might never have played them.

LORD

Well, he was going to just the same.

ANN

Does that console you?

LORD

You remember that night—I had asked you to go away with me. You refused. I left you never intending to see you again. I walked the streets. I hadn't eaten all day, then I saw what was going to happen. I came back to the house. All the time I was in a sort of trance.

ANN

Poor Sherman.

LORD

Nothing could have saved him. It was inevitable.

ANN

[*Rises and crosses to fireplace.*] How can you? How can you?

LORD

You forget this infallible gift of mine.

ANN

[*Crossing to R. end of sofa.*] Well, Raphael, this faculty comes in very handy for you. It enables you to share a secret with God. I'm a little surprised you permit even that partnership.

LORD

Might as well let God in on it!

ANN

[*A bit put out in her argument by his humor.*] It's incredible to me that you continue to believe this—literally . . .

LORD

I've proved it to myself. I've tested it almost every day of my life. Take Ariandos, for instance. Every nation in the world is tapping the earth for oil. It's the most intensely waged competition there is. And yet, I find this field. It's been the same with everything I've tried from that day five years ago when I borrowed Douglas' inheritance to follow a hunch on the stock-market. I knew when to buy. I knew the exact moment when to sell. Why was this given to me? Where does it come from? Why was I chosen? I feel as apart from the

common herd, as if I belonged to another species. I am superior. Well, there's a price on superiority. I'll pay it.

ANN

Well, will you tell me what is my place in all this?

LORD

Inside spectator. I should think you'd find it amusing.

ANN

I don't. The spectacle doesn't amuse me. I see you all the time drawn in deeper into your business schemes, getting more greedy, more selfish, more vindictive. You egotists never consider the other person's ego.

LORD

We do when we have to.

ANN

What about all your promises to me? We were going to achieve things together, remake life together.

LORD

Well, why should we bother to write books? Let other people write them about us.

ANN

Your life doesn't touch mine at any point. Do you think I married you to be stuck away in a formal garden—to spend my life sitting on a rustic bench making designs in the nice gravel with the tip of my parasol? My life was clear. I had my work. Now, what am I? An appendage to you. And what are you? You don't

know yourself any more where the truth in you begins or ends. This place for the slums of the world to disgorge. Why are you slaughtering natives in Ariandos?

LORD

[*Deeply angry.*] What's that? What did you say?

ANN

Yes. Yes. Don't you think we know? Do you think we're blind?

LORD

[*Deadly calm.*] You've been reading Vining's papers.

ANN

It'll be in Estabrook's papers too.

LORD

What do you know about it?

ANN

He spoke to Dr. Avery last night.

LORD

Oh! He did! Well, it's thoroughly unimportant what that anemic high-brow, Estabrook, says about me.

ANN

Is it?

LORD

Yes. Only I forbid you to discuss my affairs in public.

ANN

Do you? Because your affairs won't bear a close examination.

LORD

Yes. I don't consider you competent to discuss my career. I don't accept your standards.

ANN

I don't accept yours. I never have. I never will. Utopian machine-gunner! Why don't you come out with the truth?

LORD

If you want the truth I'll tell you the truth. It's that you don't possess me entirely. That's what's eating you up, not the poor down-trodden natives in Ariandos. You want to fill my life—every cranny—every instant. Well, you won't. You can't. I have energies and imaginations outside and beyond you. Outside and beyond myself. You grudge me my greatness. You grudge me my vision because they don't need you.

ANN

Well, now I know where I am. . . .

LORD

I'm not interested in your sentimental theories. I have to read this sort of puling stuff in the press and I won't have it in my own home.

ANN

Won't you?

LORD

No. [*There is a pause. He feels that he has gone too far. Shifts to charm.*] You're serious, aren't you?

ANN

Yes. So are you.

LORD

What are we quarreling about? [*He starts to kiss her. She turns away. In his anger he almost strikes her.* AVERY *comes in from the library U.L.*]

AVERY

It's really a first!

LORD

Well, Doctor, how do you like your book?

AVERY

This will make me the envy of Calvert.

LORD

[*As he goes upstairs U.R.*] You see, I'm not one of those rich men without culture. [*He goes out.*]

AVERY

[*Crossing to* ANN.] Look Ann—1642. [*He sees for the first time that something is wrong.*] What's the matter?

ANN

I'm afraid. What's going to happen? What's going to happen?

FAST CURTAIN

# *Act Three*

## *ACT THREE*

SCENE: *The same. One year later.*
AT RISE: AVERY *and* LORD *are talking.* LORD *is seated at L. of table D.L. and* AVERY *at R. There is a decanter of whiskey on the table beside them, together with White Rock, etc. There is a drink poured for each of them.*

LORD

Finish your drink, Doctor.

AVERY

Do you want me to make an exhibition of myself before the assembled scientists?

LORD

What are you going to talk to them about?

AVERY

I haven't the faintest idea.

LORD

I'll tell you why I telegraphed you to come, although it lets me down a bit to know that you had to come anyway to make a speech at a banquet.

AVERY

I'm glad to let you down. That's what you need.

LORD

It's about Ann.

AVERY

She's well, isn't she?

LORD

Yes.

AVERY

It's a great grief to me that she's at at Westlands. I assumed naturally that you would tell her that I was coming.

LORD

You can telephone her and drive out in the morning. Another drink? Do.

AVERY

No, thank you. My paper is hazy enough to me as it is. If I drank a quarter of what you've absorbed since we've been sitting here, I should be what my students call pie-eyed.

LORD

Oh, drink doesn't affect me. I'm immune to it. One of my little peculiarities.

AVERY

You transcend time. Are you above physiology?

LORD

I never condescend to physiology. [AVERY *laughs.*] Why don't you make me the subject of your paper, Doctor?

AVERY

Perhaps I have.

LORD

It's the only thing that would bring me to your damn lecture.

AVERY

What a passion for hearing yourself discussed. Well, come along if you like—I promise you you'll understand very little of it. I'm being very abstruse tonight.

LORD

I bet I could. I've been reading like hell lately.

AVERY

Have you?

LORD

Yes. Science. Philosophy. Things I haven't seen—names I haven't heard since I left college. Once in a while I get a gleam that illuminates me.—Me, myself, I mean.

AVERY

The hypochondriac searching for symptoms. . . . Well? Have you found it?

LORD

Precious little. One fellow—a Frenchman—juggles with time. He imagines a world in which the entire past is spread out simultaneous with the present—"Like a fan," he says. That made me think. Suppose the entire future is spread out like that too—and I am the one

human being—the one unlucky human being in the world. . . .

AVERY

Unlucky? A year ago you were revelling in this distinction.

LORD

Yes, that was a year ago. There's not much thrill in it any more.

AVERY

Really!

LORD

No. There's no contest. Everything's so clearly laid out—so simple—so easy. Up to a few months ago I went through the motions of routine. At my desk every morning at nine. I consulted. I conferred. To flatter my subordinates, I asked their opinions. But lately I've lost patience. I hardly go down town any more. I've simply relegated duties to the heads of departments. If they do their jobs at all business will go on through sheer inertia.

AVERY

The executive's paradise . . .

LORD

No. It's not the same thing. . . . You'll find Douglas for instance very much upset over a man called Maxwell. Oh, you remember him, don't you?

AVERY

Of course.

LORD

Maxwell's been laying an elaborate scheme to sell me out to some business rivals headed by Larrabee Fremont. If I thought there were any little chance of Maxwell's succeeding I might get some kick out of it.

AVERY

Supposing Maxwell did succeed. Wouldn't that disturb your illusion of infallibility?

LORD

Illusion! It has never failed me.

AVERY

Magnificent!

LORD

I've known all about Maxwell from the very beginning. He'll never arrive.

AVERY

How do you mean?

LORD

At the last moment things will fail him— He will be helpless.

AVERY

If there were some way I could help Maxwell I'd do it. Just to see what you'd say after your debacle.

LORD

[*With a large gesture.*] Go as far as you like, Doctor.

AVERY

You'd probably wiggle out of it. I knew a charming lady once who got it into her head that the world was going to end on a certain Wednesday. She went around saying good-bye to her friends and providing them with candles against the preliminary darkness. On Thursday I called her up to felicitate with her on our mutual survival. She was perfectly undisturbed. She explained to me that her Wednesday was not my Wednesday—she went by a calendar entirely personal to herself.

LORD

You class me among the neurotic females?

AVERY

I class you among the neurotic males—a company not without its immortals.

LORD

That's handsome of you, Doctor. [*He comes abruptly to a close and changes the subject.*] This is why I've sent for you. I have to leave Ann. I can't go on.

AVERY

What's happened?

LORD

I'm afraid for Ann.

AVERY

Afraid! What of?

LORD

There's something hanging over me and I don't want to involve Ann.

AVERY

This is the merest bogey-chasing. What's hanging over you? What are you afraid of?

LORD

The future.

AVERY

Why should you fear it more than I? More than anyone?

LORD

Because—I shall know it and you won't. I'll see it—and you won't. Whatever life holds for me—I'll see the first long shadow. I'll have to wait—till I catch up to it. Can you imagine—that waiting?

AVERY

My dear boy . . . !

LORD

No, listen. How can I make you see it? For you—for everyone—it's the darkness in which you live which makes life possible for you. You're like motorists driving in a thick fog at night—your lights show you only a few inches at a time—but you are confident that the way is clear. In that confidence you live. But for me there is no fog. If you knew how I envy you—your unconsciousness of the future. To me—it's a charged present, ambush! What will it be? Whom will it touch? That's it, Doctor, whom will it touch?

AVERY

I've always thought that people who believe in this sort of possibility belong to an outside fringe of the mind—not to be counted among adults. People who consult astrologers and read horoscopes—that absurd crew with their silly little charts—who think they can outmaneuver Destiny, steal the Creator's plans—like spies in a sort of cosmic melodrama.

LORD

You take Ann away from me. It's better if I never see her again.

AVERY

But why?

LORD

I sense this shadow hanging over her.—Something—and that I shall be the cause of it.

AVERY

You don't understand yourself. She frustrates you and so you think you see something threatening her.

LORD

No. No. Will you take her back to Calvert? Will you do this for me?

AVERY

Yes, I will.

LORD

She'll be all right with you.

AVERY

But what will you do?

LORD

I don't know. I'll go away to Ariandos. Oh, I'm immensely relieved I can't tell you.

AVERY

I'm greatly disappointed, Raphael. I should have foreseen something like this would happen. . . .

[DOUGLAS *comes in from L. He is greatly troubled—very keyed up.*]

DOUGLAS

Oh, Raphael.—Dr. Avery—I didn't know you were in town. . . .

AVERY

How are you, Douglas?

DOUGLAS

Well, I don't know. . . . [*He is glad to see* DR. AVERY *—but* AVERY *is an outsider to him at this moment.*] Where in hell have you been, Raphael? I've telephoned here and to Westlands. For two blessed days I've been trying to get hold of you.

LORD

What's the matter?

DOUGLAS

~~God~~, Rafe, it's awful. Maxwell resigned today.

LORD

That's too bad.

DOUGLAS

He's gone over openly to the Fremont people.

LORD

What of it?

DOUGLAS

Imagine how sure he must have been to have done that.

LORD

What of it?

DOUGLAS

But look what's happened! I tell you we're up against it. I don't know what you really could do now—and you don't do anything. You're never in your office. You sit there drinking as if you didn't know what's happened.

AVERY

What *has* happened?

DOUGLAS

[*Almost screaming.*] He's facing ruin! The Fremont people have bribed President Ramenez and the whole Ariandos government. Ramenez has dug up fake leases supposed to belong to some old families down there. ~~Well~~, they antedate our leases. What can we do? Ramenez—and Ramenez is the government—says our leases aren't legal. With him against us we'll never get

anywhere. We'll never so much as get one more well started.

LORD

Ramenez is a figure-head. How long do you think he'll last?

DOUGLAS

Have you got anyone down there—anyone you can trust, looking after Ramenez' successor? Maxwell had Fremont's money when he went down there—and he used it. . . . You haven't anybody—they're all Fremont's people. The trouble is, you don't seem to care what's happening. Something's stopping you. God knows what it is!

AVERY

Is it so bad?

DOUGLAS

Half his holdings have been leased by Ramenez to the Fremonts. I had a cable today from Warren.

LORD

What did he say?

DOUGLAS

[*Handing the cable to him.*] Here it is.

LORD

[*Glancing at it.*] It's too long . . . what's the gist of it?

DOUGLAS

The gist of it is that the big deposits are on the properties that Fremont now holds. Oh, we can fight this

out legally but by the time we ever got a court decision where would we be? Besides the news will break at any moment. What do you think will happen then—when it's out that you sold stock on properties to which you had no clear title? The bottom'll drop out of everything that's all—the stockholders'll have a panic—it'll be like a run on a bank. There'll be no stopping it—God knows what.

AVERY

What about this?

LORD

It will never happen.

DOUGLAS

How are you going to stop it?

LORD

It will never happen.

DOUGLAS

I tell you it's happening. That's what you said the last time I saw you. You've done nothing! You let this happen. [*He turns to* AVERY *in despair.*] This is what I've been up against all the time—for months. I don't know what to do any more. It's this terrible apathy. I simply can't move him. I tell you it's awful. It'll be all right—that's all I ever get out of him. You can imagine how set it all is when Maxwell gives up a fifty thousand dollar job to . . .

[*The* BUTLER *comes in.*]

BUTLER

Mr. Maxwell to see Mr. Lord.

DOUGLAS

Maxwell!

LORD

Tell him to come in.

[*The* BUTLER *goes out.*]

DOUGLAS

You're going to see him?

LORD

Yes. I sent for him. [*To* AVERY *who rises.*] Don't go, Doctor.

AVERY

I've got to go to that awful dinner. Douglas, if there's anything I can do, let me know.

LORD

You might try to get Westlands on the phone again. Ann must surely be back by now.

AVERY

All right. I'll try and get her from the hotel. [AVERY *goes out.*]

DOUGLAS

I'll be back later.

LORD

All right.

[DOUGLAS *goes out.* LORD *left alone prepares a glass, etc. for* MAXWELL. MAXWELL *comes in from L.*]

MAXWELL

You sent for me.

LORD

Yes. [*He closes the doors and crosses back to table R.*] Have a drink?

MAXWELL

No, thanks.

LORD

Oh, do.

MAXWELL

All right.

[LORD *hands him a drink.*]

LORD

Sit down. Happy days! [*They both sit.* LORD *at R. and* MAXWELL *at L. of table.*] I hear you've resigned.

MAXWELL

Yes.

LORD

I sent for you before I knew that you had resigned. I sent for you to make you an offer. I still make it—sincerely.

MAXWELL

What's your proposition?

LORD

I sent for you to offer you a share in my business. I'm willing to make you a partner.

MAXWELL

That's very generous.

LORD

It is, indeed! Well?

MAXWELL

No.

LORD

It may be a bigger offer than you at the moment think!

MAXWELL

I still decline with thanks. [*His courtesy, over-elaborate, has an undertone of insolence.*]

LORD

Well, that's that. ~~Another drink?~~

MAXWELL

No, thank you. [*There is a pause.*] Have you anything else to say to me?

LORD

No, that's all. [*He rises and crosses D.R.*] I'm sorry you won't accept my offer. [*He takes a cigarette from table and lights it as he crosses.*] Good-afternoon. [*There is a pause.* MAXWELL *rises and follows him D.R.*] Good-afternoon.

[MAXWELL *can scarcely believe that he is being let go like this. He has come there intending to be canny, to evade, to parry.* LORD's *brevity disarms him—his hate gets the better of him.*]

MAXWELL

Your offer! Your bribe, you mean.

LORD

I beg your pardon.

MAXWELL

You gave me this job in the first place to keep me quiet. Now you offer me a partnership to save your skin!

LORD

[*Casually.*] Oh, no, Maxwell.

MAXWELL

You thought a lousy job would make me forget what you did to my brother.

LORD

A lousy job! You know fifty thousand dollars a year wasn't bad, Maxwell. And now I offer you more. This posthumous devotion to your brother doesn't impress me. You seem to have forgotten that you were willing to let him play a dozen matches for money.

MAXWELL

[*Simmering down—wily again.*] You offer me half of Ariandos, do you?

LORD

Yes.

MAXWELL

You know the way I feel about you. And yet you offer me half of what you think you've got. Why?

LORD

I regret what happened to your brother. I regret my part in it. It was outside my intention. . . .

MAXWELL

You planned it—just the way it happened. God, how it worked out for you. Your luck!

LORD

Luck! There's nothing to be gained by this. I'm sorry you won't accept my offer. Good-afternoon. [*He is not ironic—very tired.*]

MAXWELL

Your offer!

LORD

Yes, my offer.

MAXWELL

Your offer! I love that! Tomorrow this time you won't be worth the powder to blow you to hell.

LORD

Are you sure of that?

MAXWELL

Yes. And so are you. It's too late for bluffing now.

You know it damn well or you wouldn't have sent for me after I'd kicked you over.

LORD

Well, what are you waiting for?

MAXWELL

Tomorrow this time you'll be a national scandal. The newspapers'll be full of how you robbed 20,000 stockholders. The biggest bubble the street's ever known—the meteor that fell to earth. They'll have a great time with you—photographs of this house—photographs of Westlands. Bought with the widows' and orphans' money. It'll be a riot. Raphael Lord, the mushroom financier. A riot . . . You offer me half your business! Well, that's very generous! Half your jail sentence maybe!

LORD

I really thought you were cleverer than this.

MAXWELL

This bluff won't get you anything. It's too late for that.

LORD

Not so quick, Maxwell. Discipline!

MAXWELL

For four years I've taken your orders—waited hours for you while you got good and ready to see me. I've gone to Westlands and waited a whole day for a five-

minute conference while you showed your guests your rose-gardens. Discipline!

LORD

Did you actually think I didn't know what you've been up to all this time? I've known almost from the very beginning.

MAXWELL

That's likely.

LORD

It must be obvious to you now that you haven't been fooling me all this time? You must be wondering why I haven't done anything. Well, I'll tell you. I wanted to see how long I could wait and still beat you. How close I could shave the risk! It's rather pretty. It's even beautiful. Have you any sense for spectacle, Maxwell?

MAXWELL

Look here. There is nothing you could say that will help you. You're hemmed in. You don't know how close yet, but you'll find out—and sooner than you've any idea of. . . .

LORD

Do you think I don't know that the reports you sent up from Ariandos were faked? That you and Fremont were bribing Ramenez?

MAXWELL

Prove it!

LORD

I won't have to prove it—luckily for Fremont.

MAXWELL

In twenty-four hours your name will be mud, Lord.

LORD

In twenty-four hours Fremont will have transferred his interests in Ariandos back to me from whom he stole them. Tell me, Maxwell, isn't Fremont slightly worried about me? Doesn't he regard my silence as ominous? Tell me, Maxwell, doesn't he keep asking, "What about this man Lord? What about this man Lord?"

MAXWELL

He's not in the least concerned about you, Lord. Fremont's a big man with enormous interests.

LORD

He's a small man with interests that are too big for him. No, Fremont isn't calm. Although you told him not to worry, he's left a houseful of guests on Long Island and come to town. He'll let you down, Maxwell. Decision is difficult for Fremont. But in his heart he distrusts you. He'll let you down.

MAXWELL

All this won't help you a damn. The whole thing's set. Even if every word you said were true, things have gone so far that you couldn't possibly get out. . . .

LORD

Fremont's in his office. And your worthy cousin Mullin is waiting to see him. That was a mistake. Fre-

mont won't see him—so cousin Mullin is sitting there chewing a cigar. He's getting pretty nervous—Mullin.

MAXWELL

Don't worry about Fremont. You'd better think about saving your own neck.

LORD

I'm inside Fremont's mind. I'm inside it and I tell you it's alive with indecision, with fear—with distrust of you.

MAXWELL

You've had some information.

LORD

I've had no information. Suppose I telephone Fremont?

MAXWELL

I doubt if he'd even answer you.

LORD

Suppose I threaten him with a law-suit—publicity? Suppose I tie him up with Vining and his yellow-press. Vining with you—you with Mullin—Fremont with Mullin—Fremont smuggling guns to a bandit South American president! Fremont who contributes to the building of cathedrals. Fremont, the connoisseur, the art-patron, the aristocrat. How do you think he'll feel when he hears his name being yelled through the streets? Don't you think I might possibly frighten Fremont?

MAXWELL

Wouldn't make a bit of difference. We've got Fremont hooked. He couldn't back out if he wanted to. You're done, Lord. You'll see it damn soon.

LORD

All these possibilities are crowding in on him. Supposing there's a revolution in Ariandos and he has to deal with another Ramenez? Supposing Ramenez holds him up for more money? Then there's me. There's always me. Fremont's never met me but he's heard things about me and in all this time I've been so silent. Why don't I do something? Why don't I say something? My silence has been right—magnificently right. Fremont's scared. You and Vining have done some pretty raw things in this deal and you've had to convey this to Fremont to keep him in when he wanted to back out? Haven't you?

MAXWELL

It's a lie!

LORD

It's the truth! Why should I get in touch with Fremont? He'll probably get in touch with me. [*The phone rings.*] That's Fremont now.

MAXWELL

Fremont?

LORD

Yes, Fremont.

MAXWELL

The hell it's Fremont. What are you talking about? [*The phone continues to ring.*]

LORD

Answer it!

MAXWELL

[*Crossing to phone.*] Hello . . . I'm speaking for Mr. Lord . . . What's that?

LORD

Tell Mr. Fremont he'll hear from me when I get ready. [*To himself.*] I suppose Dr. Avery would call this a coincidence.

MAXWELL

[*At telephone.*] Mr. Lord can't see Mr. Fremont today. He will communicate with him. [*Hanging up and turning to* LORD *as to an Oracle.*] What's going to happen?

LORD

[*Mechanically.*] I'll tell you. . . .

MAXWELL

You'll buy Fremont out?

LORD

I'll pay him a fancy price for his buccaneering. . . .

MAXWELL

Pay him . . .

LORD

A royalty on every barrel of oil that comes out of Ariandos.

MAXWELL

Ramenez.

LORD

Ramenez will find himself dealing with me instead of with Fremont. I don't think he'll mind, do you?

MAXWELL

How did you know that was Fremont?

LORD

How did I know about Vining? How did I know about you? [*He says this not arrogantly but with a sort of despairing recklessness. He feels himself caught in a tight hand and that what he says now can't matter.*]

MAXWELL

Sherman—how did you know about Sherman?

LORD

How did I know about Sherman?

MAXWELL

Tell me that.

LORD

I knew.

[ANN *comes in from D.L. Crosses back of table to U.C. and stops when she hears* MAXWELL.]

MAXWELL

You killed my brother— You killed my brother . . . [*He rushes out D.L.*]

LORD

I thought you were at Westlands. [ANN *does not reply but starts off U.R.* LORD *crosses to chair R. of table L.*] I did my best for Maxwell. Well, what if he is right? What if I did kill Sherman?

ANN

[*Who has come back into room from alcove, having taken off her hat and coat.*] Oh, Raphael!

LORD

Am I never to be forgiven that night? [*He sits in chair right of table L.*]

ANN

[*Having put her hat and coat on table R., crosses to above him at his left.*] Let me talk to you.

LORD

If only something would happen. . . . Just now with Maxwell I told him things—things he knew no one could have told me. I heard myself saying things I didn't know myself. When I began talking the words came to me . . . it was as if someone else was speaking. There was a moment when I prayed I might be wrong, but I knew I couldn't be. I felt such an awareness that I could have crushed him with the sheer force of my mind. The same dreadful clarity surrounds everything I do. I can

no longer endure this light. I am blinded by it. Ann, I am tired. [*He breaks.*]

ANN

I knew this was going to happen. I've been watching this happen. [*She takes his head in her arms—strokes his hair; he is lulled by a momentary comfort.*] Listen, Raphael dearest.

LORD

There's no way out.

ANN

What's the matter? Here you are harassed and tortured. By what? Over what? You've given yourself up to some power that's consuming you. You've denied me. Raphael, turn to me. Trust me.

LORD

It's no use, Ann.

ANN

Raphael! Trust me. Listen to me.

LORD

[*Thrusting her away.*] It's no use. If once—if only once, I had been wrong. But no—never. I'm haunted. Nothing can save me—not you,—not anybody.

ANN

So this is where your brilliant career has brought you! Into a grim-farcical impasse where you can neither live nor die.

LORD

[*To himself.*] I am adrift—in a cruelly-lighted world—with no merciful shadow—no darkness.

ANN

[*Crossing to his right and on her knees.*] My love . . . is it nothing to you?

LORD

No.

ANN

No peace, no rest, no hope?

LORD

No. No. Why doesn't it touch me? Why doesn't it reach me? Why don't I feel it? Why don't I hear it?

ANN

Because you don't listen. You won't. You don't look at me. You don't see me. Even now, in this moment when you need me. It's yourself—that's all you ever see— Your own voice is all you ever hear. . . .

LORD

I am alone.

ANN

Is it my fault? I've tried. I've begged. I've prostrated myself. What can I do against your egotism? What can anyone do against it? All the words I know—simplicity, strength, love, what are they to you? What do they mean to you—nothing. Less than nothing.

LORD

I'm caught in a blind alley and you fling symbols at me. . . .

ANN

How can I speak to you? What are your symbols? Death and destruction. . . .

LORD

Don't say that. . . .

ANN

Yes. Yes. Yes. Death and destruction. [*They both rise.*] You destroy whoever comes in your way. Haven't I heard you say you hate me? Haven't I seen it in your eyes? Those you can't conquer, you annihilate. You like to talk about remote Utopias, but those near you—you kill . . . !

LORD

[*Crossing to fireplace R.*] Don't say that!

[ANN'S *words have put nakedly his sub-conscious fears.*]

ANN

[*Crossing to him to front of sofa.*] I want to bring you back.

LORD

[*Recoiling from her.*] I want you to go away from me—go away from me. I never want to see you again.

ANN

Why?

LORD

Why . . .

ANN

Why?

LORD

I'm afraid.

ANN

Of what?

LORD

Just now I felt myself on the verge of something dreadful.

ANN

What?

LORD

Just now when you said those words—those near you, you kill—I felt somehow I'd heard those words before.

ANN

My love—~~my love.~~

LORD

Ann, I want you to go away from me. [*She comes toward him.*] Yet, what good will that do you? Nothing can save you. That's the hell I've found. If I must destroy you—I must. Ann, pity me!

ANN

I'm not afraid. I love you. [*He stops suddenly, staring straight ahead of him.* ANN *is in terror.*] What are you staring at?

LORD

[*After a pause.*] The end. I've seen the end. Why was this sent to me? Of course I see it now. I'll kill myself. [*In the distance, as yet indistinct, newsboys have started shouting: Extra—"The Ariandos Bubble—The Downfall of Raphael Lord."*] I see what I have to do. Break this chain of circumstance that's forcing me to kill you. [ANN *goes nearer to him.*] Don't come near me. I must do it to save you. Don't be afraid. Ann, I want you to leave me now.

ANN

No.

LORD

I beg you.

ANN

No.

LORD

This is the only way to save you. I've got to. [*He rushes past her toward library U.L. When he reaches U.S.C.* DOUGLAS *enters from D.L. with newspaper. The shouts in the streets are now loud and very distinct.*]

DOUGLAS

[*Stopping* LORD.] Vining's published.

LORD

What?

DOUGLAS

Vining's published.

LORD

[*In his frenzy taking* DOUGLAS *by the throat and shaking him.*] What?

DOUGLAS

Vining's published. What did I tell you? The downfall of Raphael Lord.

LORD

Shut up! I don't believe it.

DOUGLAS

It's in the evening papers. The Ariandos Bubble. My God, Raphael, why didn't you do something?

LORD

But I saw that tomorrow. . . .

DOUGLAS

Tomorrow? Why didn't you do something today.

[*Telephone begins ringing.*]

LORD

Tomorrow I saw myself and Fremont . . . [*Outside the calls are still clear and loud. The telephone continues to ring.*]

DOUGLAS

[*Indicating the phone.*] It must be the reporters.

ANN

Answer the phone downstairs, Douglas. Say there's no one here.

[DOUGLAS *goes out D.L.*]

LORD

[*Oblivious to all this turmoil and as one noting a curious phenomenon.*] Tomorrow I saw myself and Fremont—I heard Fremont saying: "Very well, Mr. Lord" —I mentioned the sum, the exact sum—I heard Fremont say: "I consider that quite satisfactory, Mr. Lord"—I heard the words—the intonation, the precise—a lisp. I've never met Fremont but I know he has a lisp—"the thum quite thatithfactory . . ." I heard him so distinctly . . . I heard him say it. Did I? Did I?

ANN

Raphael, darling. I'm so glad. I'm so glad.

LORD

[*Not seeing nor hearing.*] I saw Fremont so distinctly.

ANN

But you weren't to see Freemont until tomorrow.

LORD

I know. I know. And it will never take place!

ANN

But don't you see, Raphael? This sets you free.

LORD

Maxwell and Vining. I was sure . . .

ANN

A moment ago you were praying for this to happen. Well, it has happened. Your gift has failed you.

LORD

Tomorrow half a continent . . .

ANN

Thank God it's happened.

LORD

The Ariandos Bubble. . . . [*The calls are now becoming more distant—but at this moment there is a definite call: "Extra—extra— The Ariandos Bubble— The downfall of Raphael Lord."* LORD *turns in the direction from which this is coming and listens. He crosses and sits L. end of sofa. The actuality has at last reached him.*]

ANN

[*Following him to sofa and sitting on his R.*] Let me draw you close. Let me hold you. Let me shield you.

LORD

Vining published. I was so sure he wouldn't. This is the first time, Ann. The first time.

ANN

You thought you were infallible. Well, that isn't human, Raphael. You should never have assumed it.

LORD

I'm like everybody else then!

ANN

Oh, my dear.

LORD

I'm nothing.

ANN

You prayed for this release.

LORD

I'll have to get used to this. What am I now? What have I now?

ANN

You have me— You have yourself— Your real self.

LORD

But what am I in my own eyes? One of the herd— one of the millions I've always despised. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. It isn't possible. I don't believe it!

ANN

Don't you see, Raphael, now you have a chance to be something for the first time? You were willing to die for me. What about living for me? Is that so much harder you can't face it? Have you no pride, no anger, no belief in your own character or in my love? [*She is holding him in her arms.*]

LORD

But you don't understand. A liar, a charlatan, a failure. That's what I'll be before everybody—before the world. I could stand that—I could endure that if I myself— It's the first time in my life that in my own mind . . . Even when I begged meals on country roads, when I slept on park benches, I felt proud and sure and con-

temptuous of those around me. But now— What am I? What am I?

ANN

Raphael dearest, listen. I've never felt so close to you, so near to you, so hopeful of you. Now I can break through the fallacy, the lie in your career. You thought your little calculations included life and death. Thank God this lie is exploded. Now we can get away from all this lying and trickery and bloodshed. Now you can face yourself, your own possibilities, your own strength. This, oh Raphael darling, don't you see? This sets you free.

LORD

Sets me free. . . .

ANN

Why pursue your meanest talent and let your finest wither?

LORD

Sets me free. My own possibilities. My own strength. You're right, Ann. You're right. You're right.

ANN

Thank God you see it! I bless those men who've beaten you. I bless those newsboys crying your defeat.

[*The calls which have been getting lower and lower, now stop.*]

LORD

Defeat? What defeat?

ANN

Now I can approach you. I can speak to you. Thank God for your defeat.

LORD

Defeat? You mean they've beaten me? They haven't beaten me. Because of my gift, I waited; I temporized. I let this happen. I relied on my gift instead of on myself. You're right, Ann. This sets me free. [*He rises and crosses D.L.*] Of all the things that have ever happened to me, this is the luckiest. Now, for the first time, I'm ready for my destiny. How could I have been so foolish as to rely on something outside myself when all the time I had my own talent, my own brain, my own unconquerable will!

ANN

Raphael!

LORD

Now, my untrammeled genius will live. [*Crosses to C.*] Because of my gift I showed them mercy. Now I'll show no mercy. I'll fight them with my own unaided strength. I'll teach them who I am. I'll drive them to the wall. [*He crosses U.S.C. to top of stairs, C. arch.*] I'll bleed them white. I'll crucify them.

ANN

[*Who has followed him up to below stairs L. of C. arch.*] This is what you are, then.

LORD

What do you want—to have them make a pauper out of me? And am I to do nothing?

ANN

Yes, that is what I want.

LORD

Don't you think I can rise up out of all this?

ANN

I'm sure you can.

LORD

These men are trying to rob me.

ANN

Between you and them there is very little to choose that I can see. A half-dozen greedy men squabbling over a possession that doesn't belong by right to any one of you. Revolution! Bloodshed! What have I to do with all this?

LORD

If I accept defeat at the hands of these men what will become of me?

ANN

[*Crossing to table back of sofa.*] Fight. Win your victories. Good-bye. [*She takes up her hat and coat.*]

LORD

[*Coming into the room again.*] What do you mean?

ANN

I'm leaving you.

LORD

You can't.

ANN

I know now that I can.

LORD

I won't let you go. Let me fight this out this once.

ANN

No.

LORD

[*Having gone to above table L., and picked up phone.*] Whitehall 9000. I'll make a scandal out of this that will shake the whole country. I'll drive that effeminate weakling Fremont to his grave.

ANN

Raphael, if you go on with this it's the end for us.

LORD

Is this Whitehall 9000?

ANN

Do you realize what you're doing?

LORD

Yes. I realize what I'm doing. [*Speaking in the phone again.*] This is Raphael Lord speaking. I want to speak to

Mr. Fremont. You know damn well he's in and if he knows what's good for him he'll speak to me.

ANN

Raphael, I mean what I say.

LORD

I am what I am. I can't change.

ANN

And I am what I am. I can't change. Good-bye. [*She crosses below table L. toward door L.*]

LORD

[*Turning toward her.*] You'll only be drawn back. You know that.

ANN

Well, I don't know. [*She goes out, closing the door behind her.*]

LORD

[*Shouting after her.*] Ann! Ann! [*He is aware of an irreplaceable loss—he takes refuge in anger.*] All right! Go on! I don't need you. I don't need anyone. [*Speaking into phone again.*] Hello. Mr. Fremont. This is Raphael Lord speaking. You know, Mr. Fremont, two can play at this game. If you want a fight, I'll give you a fight.—Not so fast, Mr. Fremont.—Not so quickly.—We must keep our heads, both of us. [*A smile lights up his face.*]

Here? In half an hour?—Very well. [*He hangs up the receiver and stands silent, his body taut, nerved for the impending combat.*]

FAST CURTAIN

Jeff Trotter

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